VOL III

The McGill Journal of Refugee and Migration Studies

2024-2025

MJRMS
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The McGill Journal of Refugee and Migration Studies

La Revue des Études sur les Réfugiés et la Migration de McGill

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Volume III | 2024-2025

About the Journal

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The MJRMS is a student-run academic Journal affiliated with the WUSC McGill local committee. Our main goal is to complement WUSC's work on campus by raising awareness about refugee and migration issues. We achieve this by offering a platform for undergraduate and graduate students who wish to publish their work highlighting important issues regarding these topics.

To view past copies of this Journal, please visit: issuu.com/mjrms.

La RERMM est une revue universitaire dirigée par des étudiants et affiliée au comité local de l'EUMC McGill. Notre principal objectif est de compléter le travail de l'EUMC en sensibilisant les gens aux questions liées aux réfugiés et à la migration. Nous y parvenons en offrant une plateforme aux étudiants de premier cycle et deuxième cycles qui souhaitent publier leurs travaux soulignant des questions importantes relatives à ces sujets.

Pour consulter les numéros précédents de cette revue, veuillez visiter: issuu.com/mjrms.

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Land Acknowledgment

The McGill Journal of Refugee and Migration Studies was produced principally at McGill University in Montreal, also known as Tiohtià:ke to the Kanien'kehà:ka Nation. We recognise this Nation as the original custodians of these land and waters and deeply respect their right to self-determination. As well, we acknowledge the enduring impacts of colonial violence experienced by Indigenous Peoples and urge readers to engage with their unique histories and experiences.

Reconnaissance des Terres

La Revue des Études sur les Réfugiés et la Migration de McGill a été réalisée principalement produit à l'Université McGill de Montréal, également connue sous le nom de de Tiohtià:ke par la Nation Kanien'kehà:ka. Nous reconnaissons que cette Nation est la gardienne originelle de ces terres et de ces eaux et nous respectons profondément son droit à l'autodétermination. Nous reconnaissons également les impacts persistants de la violence coloniale subie par les peuples autochtones et nous invitons nos lecteurs à s'intéresser à leur histoire et á leurs experiences uniques.

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Editor's Note

Dear readers,

It is my absolute pleasure to present to you the third volume of The McGill Journal of Refugee and Migration Studies! After a two-year hiatus, we are proud to share our newly revitalized edition for the 2024-2025 academic year.

The Journal seeks to contribute to the central mission of WUSC by promoting awareness about issues facing refugees and migrants while offering students a chance to publish their work. Over the past year, we have made remarkable forward progress towards this goal, receiving a record number of applications to both the Editorial Board and team of writers. As well, we redesigned our website, secured a renewable source of funding, created an Instagram account, and - most excitingly - published our first-ever slate of twenty-five printed copies that will be distributed to our greatest sources of assistance.

This volume would assuredly not exist without the dedicated efforts of several key people. My esteemed Editorial Board deserve first recognition, having been instrumental in supporting me and in taking initiative. I am also deeply indebted to the co-chairs of WUSC, Trisha-Mae Capistrano and Mohammad Alnatour, who entrusted me with the position of Editor-in-Chief, and have been guiding forces throughout. I owe thanks, too, to several professors who have influenced my interest in the field, especially Kazue Takamura who stands out as a source of significant inspiration.

Our third volume features of an array of seven diverse and intriguing submissions that center on no fewer than eight countries, including two pieces focussed specifically on WUSC and its accomplishments. I do very much hope that you enjoy reading as much as I have enjoyed being a part of this incredible team, and I thank you profusely for your support.

Sincerely yours,

Rohan Rastogi
Editor-in-Chief, 2024-2025

Introductory Article

Giving Back to the Community: on Resilience, Action and Hopes for the Future

Written by Plem Kijamba Lushembe, edited by Mar Oromí Llobet.

Three years ago, I mobilized young college students in Quebec to create a development initiative, aimed at promoting refugee girls' access to education. Together, and in partnership with the Comité Régional d'Éducation pour le Développement International de Lanaudière (CRÉDIL) and Windle International Uganda, we implemented the Quebec Youth-to-Youth scholarship program, a program sponsoring refugee girls to complete the last two years of their secondary education, secondary five and six. The rationale was simple: the two last years are the most challenging ones for refugees financially, but the most impactful ones in terms of professional and academic development. I justified the positive discrimination on the basis of the existing disparities between boys and girls in terms of access to secondary education.

As I navigated between the bureaucracies of the camp to find partners who would ensure the selection process is transparent and representative of students' needs, I encountered a redundant question: What was motivating me to help young refugees access education, even while I was all the way in Canada, and why did I feel, on a personal level, that this was something I had to be a part of? The same question seemed to occupy the minds of those who knew about my other community involvements, including my internship at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Montreal and my field research in Jordan on economic opportunities for refugee youth along the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). My response was and remains the same: I am simply trying to give back to the community at every chance I get. But what do I owe to the community, and why? Reflecting about my dues to the refugee community requires for me to look back on my journey, from a young boy fleeing death in eastern Congo, to living in a refugee camp in western Uganda, to becoming a university student committed to creating a space where fellow refugees can find a little faith for the future.

When I found myself in the refugee camp in 2015, I did what all refugees do: try to survive. Survival required navigating the dependency on WFP's monthly food ration, strategically deciding at what time of the day we should have our single meal – even if it was hard to explain to the little ones–, or wondering whether our shelter could stand the next heavy wind. But along the quest for survival, there was also one for learning, understanding, and developing, and to meet more than basic biological needs.

The English language was of course of paramount requirement, owing to the British colonization of Uganda. After making good use of the one library then available in the camp and studying English books, probably written at Oxford, I started knocking on the doors of the camp's humanitarian bureaucrats. That included the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Finn Church Aid (FCA), to name only a few. Here is how I would introduce myself: "My name is Plem Kijamba Lushembe. If you provide me with a box of chalks and a few notebooks, I could teach fellow refugees English." Some of them took me seriously, although most did not. But this was okay with me, because I

had dreams, and I refused to see them vanishing. For example, ever since I was a child, I have dreamed of attending university and studying and teaching philosophy. And although this has now changed, due to my encounter with development dilemmas in the camp, my hopes for the future remain. Refugees have dreams too, whether small or big. Friends that I knew in the camp wanted to become tailors, bus drivers, and nurses; we used to make fun of Jean-Pierre, who wanted to become a lawyer! And above all, we all shared the dream of returning home one day.

As far as I am concerned, my dream of attending University remained a fantasy for a very long time until WUSC, a Canadian global development organization established a Complementary Education Pathway program in Uganda. WUSC's Student Refugee Program (SRP) restored my hope, that of thousands of young refugees who have benefited from the program, as well as the families and communities in the background. Moreover, the SRP equally responded to a major concern that I had upon becoming a refugee. What mattered to me was not the fact that my civil and political rights were gone, nor the violations of basic human rights such as access to education, water, shelter, health care. Rather, what I wondered was if I would ever be able to regain them someday.

Now that I have partly regained them, I wish to give back to the people that still long for them. The best thing I can do to honor the program is to give back to other refugees, who are continuously fighting for their survival as I was once. One way I have chosen to take action is by serving social institutions whose presence provides refuge and survival for refugees worldwide, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

When I interned at UNHCR's Montreal office in the summer of 2024, I sought to use my experience to contribute to the organization's various undertakings, such as the protection and integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Canada, as well as the defense of the integrity of the Canadian asylum system. During the internship, I volunteered as UNHCR's panelist on the World Refugee Day event, celebrating the courage and resilience of refugee populations, as well as mobilizing the Canadian public to challenge the current dehumanizing discourse and attitudes towards immigration. I emphasized that Canadians and the world can change the current negative discourse by providing an alternative discourse, one that centers on hope and change, one that is not blind of the positive contributions that refugees bring to their host communities– such as intercultural exchange and economic inputs– and one that builds a space for just a little faith for refugees. This is what I believe are my dues to the refugee community. And I take a lot of pride in them.

Implementing A Peer Support Group for Climate-Displaced Dominican Mothers in Guadeloupe: A Strategy to Combat Depression and Isolation

Written by Charlotte Petitjean, edited by Ema Sédillot Daniel.

Introduction: A Growing Crisis

The phenomenon of climate-induced displacement poses significant mental health challenges. This project focuses specifically on the impact of displacement on Dominican women relocated to Guadeloupe. Dominica, often confused with the Dominican Republic, is an island between the French overseas territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique in the Caribbean (Momsen and Niddrie, 2024). Dominica has been severely affected by tropical storms and hurricanes, leading to extensive destruction and displacement. Especially, the aftermath of Tropical Storm Erika and Hurricane Maria has resulted in catastrophic damage to the island's infrastructure and environment, propelling a humanitarian crisis. This crisis forced many Dominicans to flee to neighboring islands such as Guadeloupe for safety and stability. This displacement notably affected mothers living in Guadeloupe, increasing their feelings of depression and isolation. This was caused by their separation from their children and extended social networks, which intersects with the trauma of their displacement and the financial and living barriers experienced in Guadeloupe that exacerbated depression and isolation. This situation violates Article 25.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which emphasizes the right to a standard of living that is adequate for health and well-being, including necessary social services and the right to security in the event of circumstances beyond one's control (United Nations General Assembly 1948). This proposal aims to implement our project, a peer support group named “Ailes et Racines”, to provide the necessary social support and care for these vulnerable mothers. It aims to address the decline in mental health among displaced Dominican mothers between 30 and 50 years old residing in Guadeloupe by creating a platform where Dominican mothers can share experiences, learn from each other, and receive emotional support to counteract feelings of isolation and depression. Ailes et Racines will provide a space for Dominican mothers to build ties and form a new community within Guadeloupe, enhancing their support networks and improving their mental health. However, we must acknowledge that a peer support group involves sharing personal struggles associated with depression and isolation. It holds the risk of exacerbating those feelings instead of mitigating them by unintentionally deepening participants' emotions. This limitation may impede the successful execution of Ailes et Racines, as it would do more harm than good..

The Case of Dominica: Environmental Vulnerability and Mass Displacement

Environmental disasters have wreaked havoc on the island of Dominica, causing extensive destruction and forcing many to flee to neighboring islands like Guadeloupe. Two main events led to the mass displacement of Dominicans towards Guadeloupe. The aftermath in 2015 of Tropical Storm Erika left a trail of destruction in

Dominica, with catastrophic mudslides and flooding that destroyed hundreds of homes and left over thirty deaths, displacing hundreds of families. The total damage was estimated at around US$482.8 million, setting the country's socio-economic development back by approximately twenty years (Rock et al. 2018, 144–145). Following Tropical Storm Erika, Dominica faced physical destruction and a profound humanitarian crisis. Consequently, families were displaced, homes were destroyed, and communities were torn apart. Then came the second climate catastrophe, Hurricane Maria, in 2017, which hit Dominica as a Category 5 hurricane, causing unprecedented damage and reinforcing the island's vulnerability to climate-related disasters (Rock et al. 2018, 144). Following this hurricane, 80% of the infrastructure of the country was damaged, leading to massive environmental displacements, especially for women (Cooper et al. 2023, 7). They faced severe challenges: "Among those who […] migrated to Guadeloupe following a storm or a hurricane, daily life was rife with uncertainties and insecurities (Cooper et al. 2023, 6)." Many women sought refuge in Guadeloupe in hopes of safety and stability. Statistics show that among the immigrant populations living in Guadeloupe in 1999 following the passage of Cyclone David, of 33,900 migrants, 25% of them were from Dominica (Marzouki and Jean 2006, 13), and 2 out of 3 of the Dominican migrants were women (Marzouki and Jean 2006, 13). More recent statistics show that in 2018, 21.5% of the immigrant population in Guadeloupe was from Dominica, highlighting the continued relevance and scale of Dominican displacement and its long-term implications on host communities like Guadeloupe. This statistic underscores the need for targeted mental health and integration support for this significant migrant group. (Figure 1), showing quite stable data over the past 20 years. Unfortunately, no recent statistics show the current number of Dominican women in Guadeloupe, however, some qualitative studies include interviews, with interviewees being majorly displaced Dominican women in Guadeloupe (Cloos et al. 2023, 3–4). Those interviews show that resettlement brought significant psychological strains. Mothers, who often bear the responsibility of caregiving and maintaining family cohesion, more particularly experience a heightened sense of loss and isolation with displacement.

The Mental Health Toll on Displaced Dominican Mothers

Displacement often leads to the separation of families: "Ten days after the storm, Louretta's mother sent her and her two younger siblings (who live in the countryside) ferry tickets for Guadeloupe" (Philogene Heron 2018, 127). Women comprise the majority of the Dominican population living in Guadeloupe. According to the statistics, we can assume that many mothers were separated from their children. Being separated from their children and extended social networks exacerbates feelings of loneliness and disconnection from mothers' cultural roots and community support systems (Figure 2). Mothers often undertake roles as the primary caregivers for their families. The stress associated with this responsibility intersects with the trauma of displacement and loss. The separation of mothers from their children, whether due to logistical reasons or the children's education and welfare, adds a layer of emotional distress for mothers. A clinical study conducted by Schen highlights the struggle mothers face when separated from their families. One study involves a young woman who seeks asylum in the United States due to life-threatening political violence in her home country, leaving behind her nursing baby and other young children. The prolonged separation, coupled with the uncertainty of asylum status, plunges her into a deep depression, characterized by suicidal thoughts and paranoid delusions of being condemned by the world as a "bad mother" (Schen 2005, 239–40). This affects women's mental health and their ability to adapt to their new surroundings. Arriving in Guadeloupe, displaced

Dominican women face barriers to integration such as overcrowded living conditions, with immigrant households averaging 3.2 persons compared to 2.9 regionally (Marzouki and Jean 2006, 21), and higher unemployment rates, with 42% of immigrant active individuals being unemployed compared to 34% regionally (Marzouki and Jean 2006, 24), with immigrant women particularly affected, experiencing a high unemployment rate of 50.9% compared to 32% for immigrant men (Marzouki and Jean 2006, 25). These barriers isolate them, making it difficult to establish new social connections or access community support and resources that are crucial for their mental health and well-being. This situation leads to instances of severe depression for women, with research by Cloos et al. showing that out of the six Dominicans residing in Guadeloupe he interviewed, four perceived their mental health as negative, three out of four being women (Cloos et al. 2023, 4). Particularly, the interview with participant Agathe allows us to grasp the distress of displaced mothers. Agathe sent her children to another Caribbean state because her home was destroyed by Hurricane Maria in Dominica. This decision, made from necessity for her children's safety and well-being, left her in a state of profound loneliness and uncertainty. The emotional toll of ensuring her children's safety abroad, rebuilding her home, and her living instability in a partially restored housing situation exemplifies the trauma experienced by displaced mothers (Cloos et al. 2023, 4). The displacement, rebuilding, and adaptation significantly impact the mental health of these women as they struggle to find stability and safety in the aftermath of environmental catastrophes. These narratives highlight the critical need for a support system for displaced mothers. Mental health services must be proposed in Guadeloupe to ensure that women such as Agathe receive the support they need to overcome the psychological impacts of displacement.

Gendered Impacts: Why Focus on Mothers?

This policy will focus on displaced women from Dominica who have sought refuge in Guadeloupe, with an emphasis on mothers aged between 30 and 50 years. The reason for this stems from the idea that a one-size-fits-all model that attempts to address all the causes of depression and isolation would not be considered effective and would not suffice. Instead, focusing on a particular demographic with a more targeted approach allows us to acknowledge and better help this group. Women between 30 and 50 are a particularly important group because they are often responsible for the care of their family, and thus, the impacts of displacement and resettlement are profoundly felt by them: "Family-caregiving still remains a predominantly feminine activity" (Sharma, Chakrabarti, and Grover 2016, 8). The age range of 30 to 50 years is significant as women within this age group are likely to have children. Their need to be economically stable and take care of their children exacerbates the stress and anxiety associated with displacement. As displacement leads to financial instability, this further intensifies mothers' experiences of depression and isolation. Research has shown that immigrant women, especially mothers, face significant stressors that can deteriorate their mental health. In Canada, for instance, immigrant mothers face a decline in their mental health due to the stress of resettlement, discrimination, and the challenges of integrating into a new society: "Over half of the mothers interviewed reported being completely exhausted by the rigors of adapting to their life in a new country without their familiar social support networks" (Bohr, Hynie, and Armour 2015, 237). The situation is similar for Dominican mothers in Guadeloupe who carry the emotional burden of separation from their children and extended family networks. Heron's research highlights the narratives of Dominicans, such as the story of Sarah, who was forced to leave her family behind and relocate to the United States for safety. Sarah explains her sense of

loss and disconnection from cultural roots and family support systems, as well as her guilt and anxiety about uprooting her children to integrate them into a new community (Philogene Heron 2018, 129–30). She illustrates the experience of numerous Dominican mothers and their feelings of depression and isolation caused by their displacement.

The Ailes et Racines Project

To effectively address the decline in mental health among immigrant mothers from Dominica living in Guadeloupe, we propose implementing a peer support group, also called a discussion group, for those displaced mothers. A discussion group is defined as "a group of people sharing a similar problem, who meet regularly to exchange information and to give and receive psychological support" (Pistrang, Barker, and Humphreys 2008, 110). In this setting, this peer support group shall be named "Ailes et Racines," which translates to "Roots & Wings." "Roots" symbolizes the mothers' connection to their community, while "Wings" represents the strength and resilience to rise above challenges. The purpose of Ailes et Racines is to provide a way for Dominican mothers to create a supportive community where they can share their experiences, learn from each other, and receive emotional support to overcome the feelings of isolation and depression that come with displacement. Building social ties and having a tight-knit community is essential to healing mental wounds: "Social cohesion represents a key component in supporting psychological outcomes of populations affected by disasters and displacement" (Torres and Casey 2017, 5). This group aims to empower these women by reinforcing their sense of belonging and identity while aiding their adjustment to a new environment. The choice of a peer support group over other methods is based on multiple reasons. Peer support groups offer a unique environment where individuals with shared experiences come together to foster a sense of understanding and empathy that is hard to replicate in other settings. This model is particularly effective for depression and isolation, as it allows participants to see that they are not alone in their struggles. The shared stories and coping strategies can inspire and motivate individuals, providing practical solutions and emotional comfort. Research has shown that discussion groups can be highly effective in improving mental health outcomes as "this type of peer support may compensate for deficiencies in people's natural support networks" (Pistrang, Barker, and Humphreys 2008, 111). Because the principal cause for Dominican mothers' decline in mental health is their feeling of isolation from their family and children, a group that builds a community among those mothers becomes essential. A "social support is a resource for coping with stress caused by immigration and resettlement challenges" (Stewart et al. 2010, 92). This approach, therefore, not only fosters a sense of belonging but also provides practical, lived-experience solutions that can be more relatable and immediately applicable to the members' lives.

a. Program Location and Logistics: Why Les Abymes?

Ailes et Racines will be implemented in Les Abymes, the most populous city in Guadeloupe, for accessibility. Les Abymes is the perfect location. It is located at the island's center and is well connected by roads, making it an easy meeting point. The city's demographic profile, predominantly within the 45-59 age bracket, aligns with our target group's needs. Furthermore, the city's population includes a higher percentage of female migrants, comprising 4.9%, compared to a lower 2.5% male migrants, underscoring our support group's relevance in this community (Figure 3). Ailes et Racines will have biweekly meetings, on Tuesdays at 8

PM, each lasting 2 hours to accommodate the working hours of most mothers and to ensure that there is a continuous following but also that it is not a burden within the schedule of the participants. The sessions will be hosted in the "Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration" (OFII) Antilles. This office is located at 246 Grand Camp, Les Abymes 97139, Guadeloupe. This choice is strategic, as the office is already a known point of contact for immigrants and has secured amenities that will allow for a private meeting room that can comfortably accommodate up to 30 individuals, with seating arranged in a circle to promote inclusivity.

b. Structure of the Peer Support Group

Each meeting will have a whiteboard, projector for presentations, and refreshment facilities to ensure the participants feel as comfortable as possible. Furthermore, the support group meeting will be hosted by a bilingual moderator in French and English, with a background in psychology, specializing in displacement and depression. Those languages were chosen strategically as English is the official language of Dominica, and a French patois is also commonly spoken (Momsen and Niddrie, 2024). This moderator will be hired and trained by the "Agence Régionale de Santé Guadeloupe" (ARS) and will have at least a 2-day training workshop to understand his role, the group dynamics, and cultural sensitivity. It is important to note that Ailes et Racines is a support group, not a self-help group. This distinction is important as self-help groups are not moderated by a trained professional. A moderator is crucial to have effective results in addressing depression and isolation (Hernández-Plaza, Alonso-Morillejo, and Pozo-Muñoz 2006, 1162). It is also crucial that the mothers feel comfortable enough to share their experiences and their feelings to allow them to build a new community within Guadeloupean grounds to improve their support exchanges (Hernández-Plaza, Alonso-Morillejo, and Pozo-Muñoz 2006, 1162). For this reason, post the introductory segment, sessions will be as follows: we will begin with the first phase, the 'sharing circle,' where members will be encouraged to voice their stories, victories, and setbacks, always under the guidance of our moderator. The session's second half will feature practical workshops, alternating between creative expression, such as art therapy and educational seminars delivered by guest experts. Those sessions will have a maximum capacity of fifteen participants to ensure that participants feel comfortable and that the moderator is not overwhelmed. An anonymous online form will also allow participants to give feedback and conduct regular evaluations. These assessments will help refine the approach, ensuring that it remains responsive to the participants' needs and maintains a focus on helping mothers adjust to the new environment. Concerning the financing of this project, it will be done through the « Appel à Manifestation d'Intérêt (AMI) – Structuration de l'animation territoriale de la recherche en psychiatrie et en santé mentale » (ARS Guadeloupe 2023). This funding initiative by the health authority (ARS) aims to develop or promote projects that support the territorial structuring of research in psychiatry and mental health. Because our project aligns with the AMI's goal to enhance mental health and psychiatric care for underserved populations, it stands as a very serious potential source of funding. The selection criteria of the AMI also align perfectly: this project has a federative character, complements existing resources, serves an underserved field, and has an inclusive and collaborative territorial logic. Another important element is the outreach of this group. To ensure this opportunity for Dominican mothers is known, we will use social media platforms to create a dedicated Facebook group named "Ailes et Racines – Groupe de Soutien Guadeloupéen." This digital platform will serve as a point of information and an extended virtual support space where members can share resources.

c. Outreach and Institutional Partnerships

An integral part of the program will also include collaboration with local institutions. For this purpose, we will collaborate with the Public Mental Health Establishment (EPSM) of Guadeloupe, which includes a wide range of facilities, such as hospitals and extrahospital sites throughout the territory, focusing on the treatment of various psychological disorders (Établissement Public de la Santé Mentale de la Guadeloupe 2023, 7). This collaboration will enable direct clinical support for the Dominican mothers participating in the Ailes et Racines program, ensuring they have access to necessary psychological care. It will also utilize the network of "Groupe d'entraide Mutuelle" (GEM) managed by the French Association EQUILIBRE (Établissement Public de la Santé Mentale de la Guadeloupe 2023, 9). This group, located in Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe, offers allows individuals experiencing psychological distress such as isolation to support each other in a structured yet empathetic environment. Cooperation with GEM will allow better resources and knowledge sharing between Ailes et Racines and an established peer support system, ensuring participants have access to a broader community of support.

d. Implementation Timeline and Phases

The implementation of this project will take about one year and will be conducted in three phases. The first three months will be the pre-implementation phase to establish the structures of Ailes et Racines through securing the partnerships for the meeting space and resources, applying for funding, hiring and training the moderator, and launching the Facebook group. The second phase will be the implementation phase from month four to month six to establish the peer support meetings and engage with the target group. This includes beginning meetings at OFII, with introductory sessions for members to start getting to know each other and to foster connections with local healthcare providers and NGOs for them to bring support. Finally, the last six months will be the evaluation and expansion phase to assess the program's impact on the participants' mental health, expand outreach, and continue to refine and adapt the program.

e. Expected Outcomes and Community Impact

One of the primary expected outcomes of Ailes et Racines is a significant improvement in the mental health and overall well-being of Dominican mothers between the ages of 30 and 50 who have been displaced by environmental disasters and are now living in Guadeloupe. By providing a safe and supportive environment where these mothers can share their experiences of displacement, separation from children, and resettlement challenges, the program aims to reduce feelings of isolation and depression. These emotional burdens are compounded by overcrowded living conditions, high unemployment, and the loss of cultural and familial support networks. Through biweekly, professionally moderated group discussions, Ailes et Racines facilitates the formation of new social ties and the mutual exchange of emotional support and coping strategies. These interactions help counteract the psychological effects of disconnection and loneliness. Furthermore, the program seeks to build a lasting network among Dominican mothers who share similar migration experiences, fostering a renewed sense of community, belonging, and empowerment in their daily lives.

Potential Limitations: Shared Trauma and the Risk of Emotional Contagion

While the implementation of Ailes et Racines for displaced Dominican mothers in Guadeloupe offers a

ipromising approach to addressing the mental health challenges associated with displacement, there is an inherent obstacle. The nature of a peer support group involves the sharing of personal experiences, struggles, and feelings associated with depression and isolation. While this sharing is meant to foster a sense of community, understanding, and mutual support, it can inadvertently lead to what has been described as a "downward depressive spiral" (Coates and Winston 1983, 184). This phenomenon occurs when group members, through the process of discussing their depression and hearing others share similar experiences, begin to internalize these feelings more deeply. The validation of their experiences can normalize these feelings of sadness and anxiety, potentially leading to an increase in the intensity of these emotions. According to self-perception theory, individuals may come to feel more depressed as they engage in behaviors and conversations that agree with depression (Bem 1972, 5). The act of repeatedly expressing feelings of depression and hopelessness in a group setting can reinforce these emotions, leading individuals to perceive themselves as more depressed. Research explores the effects of shared stress and found that individuals who experienced stress together, such as receiving electric shocks, perceived the shared stressful experience as more disturbing compared to when stress was not shared (Latané 1966, 80–90). This shared stress reinforces negative emotions through a cyclical process, where the shared acknowledgment of distress amplifies the perception and intensity of that distress. Just like stress, we can suppose that feelings of depression and isolation can also be reinforced when they are shared among Dominican mothers. Addressing this limitation is challenging because individual differences in trauma histories and coping mechanisms demand tailored interventions rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to participant protection. Within the context of Ailes et Racines, this is further complexified by the diverse backgrounds and migration experiences of the Dominican mothers participating in the program. The trauma of displacement, the stress of adjusting to a new environment, and the burden of maintaining connections with their culture and families back home can all influence how they experience and deal with depression and isolation.

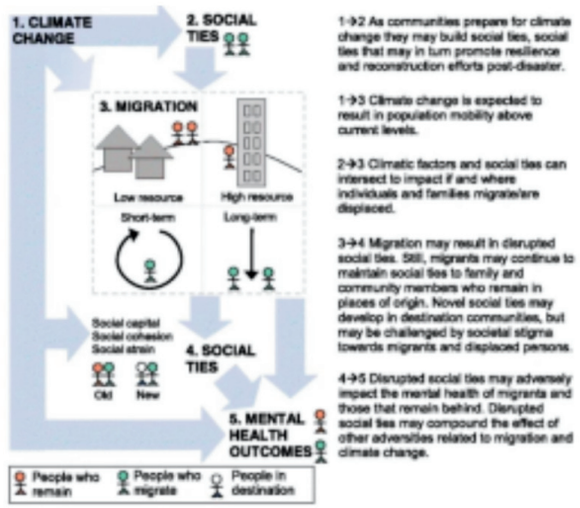
Appendix

Principaux pays d'origine pour les immigrés

	Origine des immigrés	Nombre d'immigrés	Part dans le total des immigrés (en %)
1	Haïti	11,746	58.5
2	Dominique	4,313	21.5
3	Dominicaine (Rép.)	664	3.3
4	Belgique	270	1.3
5	Syrie	262	1.3
6	Liban	183	0.9
7	Maroc	143	0.7
8	Algérie	136	0.7
9	Espagne	133	0.7
10	Sainte-Lucie	124	0.6
	Autres origines	2,100	10.5
	Total	**20,073**	**100.0**

Note : un immigré est une personne née étrangère à l'étranger.
Champ : Guadeloupe.
Source : Insee, RP2018, exploitation principale.

Figure 1. INSEE 2018. Direction Générale des Étrangers en France.


1. CLIMATE CHANGE
2. SOCIAL TIES
3. MIGRATION
Low resource
Short-term
High resource
Long-term
Social capital
Social cohesion
Social strain
4. SOCIAL TIES
Old
New
5. MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES
People who remain
People who migrate
People in destination
1→2 As communities prepare for climate change they may build social ties, social ties that may in turn promote resilience and reconstruction efforts post-disaster.
1→3 Climate change is expected to result in population mobility above current levels.
2→3 Climatic factors and social ties can intersect to impact if and where individuals and families migrate/are displaced.
3→4 Migration may result in disrupted social ties. Still, migrants may continue to maintain social ties to family and community members who remain in places of origin. Novel social ties may develop in destination communities, but may be challenged by societal stigma towards migrants and displaced persons.
4→5 Disrupted social ties may adversely impact the mental health of migrants and those that remain behind. Disrupted social ties may compound the effect of other adversities related to migration and climate change.

Conceptual Framework for the Role of Social Ties in Climate-Related Migration and Mental Health

Figure 2. Torres, Jacquelin., Casey, Joan. 2017. The centrality of social ties to climate migration and mental health.

La population immigrée des Abymes

Données 2020	Les Abymes	% de la population des Abymes	Données nationales
Population immigrée	3 938 hab.	7,4 %	9,9 %
Hommes immigrés	1 328 hab.	2,5 %	4,8 %
Femmes immigrées	2 610 hab.	4,9 %	5,1 %
Moins de 15 ans immigrés	143 hab.	0,3 %	0,5 %
15-24 ans immigrés	366 hab.	0,7 %	0,9 %
25-54 ans immigrés	2 259 hab.	4,3 %	5,2 %
55 ans et plus immigrés	1 170 hab.	2,2 %	3,3 %

Figure 3. Linternaute.com d'après l'Insee. 2020. La population immigrée des Abymes. [The immigrated population of des Abymes].

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WUSC Refugee Students: The Meaning of their Experience

Written by Hend Alqawasma & Nicole Ives, edited by Layla Lamrani.

Abstract

This study uses descriptive phenomenology to explore the lived experience of students resettled through World University Services of Canada (WUSC), a program that sponsors refugee youth's University education and resettlement in Canada. Qualitative data was collected from five in-depth interviews with three students sponsored by WUSC. Three themes emerged: 1) disconnections and resulting challenges; 2) connections and resulting benefits; 3) "life changing". While important barriers to integration of financial struggle, discrimination and oppression from their peers, and French language proficiency were identified, students expressed their participation in WUSC as life changing, associating their arrival to Canada with security and opportunity.

Abstrait

Cette étude utilise la phénoménologie descriptive pour explorer l'expérience vécue des étudiants réinstallés par l'intermédiaire de l'Entraide Universitaire Mondiale du Canada (EUMC), un programme qui parraine l'éducation universitaire et la réinstallation de jeunes réfugiés au Canada. Des données qualitatives ont été recueillies à partir de cinq entrevues approfondies avec trois étudiants de l'EUMC. Trois thèmes sont ressortis : 1) les déconnexions et les défis qui en découlent ; 2) les connexions et les avantages qui en découlent ; 3) «un changement de vie ». Bien que des obstacles importants à l'intégration aient été identifiés, tels que les difficultés financières, la discrimination et l'oppression de la part de leurs pairs, ainsi que la maîtrise de la langue française, les étudiants ont exprimé que leur participation à l'EUMC avait changé leur vie, associant leur arrivée au Canada à un sentiment de sécurité et d'opportunité.

Keywords: refugees, integration, lived experiences, sponsorship programs, access to higher education

Introduction

WUSC offers a unique program of higher education combined with permanent resettlement to youth living in refugee camps (IRCC, 2023). After a highly competitive admission process, a limited number of refugee youths are admitted through WUSC to Canadian universities or colleges each year (Peterson, 2012; Plasterer, 2011). They are sponsored by their respective educational institutions and welcomed as landed immigrants under the rules of the Private Sponsorship of Refugees program created by the Canadian Immigration Act of 1976 (Hyndman et al., 2021; IRCC, 2023; Lanphier, 2003). Despite significant opportunities that come from being selected in the WUSC program, refugee students' journeys and program experiences are challenging. Not only do they have to focus on their education, but they also must navigate their new environment,

including new cultural contexts (Peterson, 2012). Limited research has been conducted on WUSC-sponsored refugee youths' experience of resettlement and how they cope with these challenges. Through descriptive phenomenology, this article explores the meaning of WUSC youths' experience from a Canadian university to contribute towards improving the integration outcomes for current and future cohorts.

World University Services of Canada: Increasing Refugees' Access to Education

Forced migration around the world is increasing; refugee numbers rise daily, with the total number of refugees and displaced people around the world in 2023 estimated at 110 million (UNHCR, 2023), including 43 million under the age of 18 (UNHCR, 2023). The refugee definition comes from the 1951 Refugee Convention adopted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): "anyone who is forced to flee their country of origin due to fear of violence and persecution or fear thereof based on race, religion, ethnicity, political opinion or social affiliation, and who cannot return or is afraid to do so" (UNHCR, n.d.). People who are forcibly displaced and cannot return to their countries of origin often end up in refugee camps (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; McBrien, 2005).

Although considered a "temporary" solution, refugees can find themselves living in refugee camps for decades. New generations are born in camps, becoming the only home some have ever known (Dryden Peterson & Giles, 2012). Forced displacement significantly reduces children and youths' access to education (UNHCR, 2023). In many refugee camps, access to education is very limited, with only elementary or secondary schooling available. When it comes to higher levels of education, enrolment possibilities decrease due to various reasons, including political conflicts in the country where the refugee camp is located and the unavailability of financial support or access to in-country tuition for refugee students (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2012; Peterson, 2012). The UNHCR (n.d.-a.) has estimated only 7 % of refugees have access to higher education. Moreover, only Canada and Australia offer education with resettlement for refugees (Ives et al., 2020). This context illuminates the incredible opportunity offered by the partnership of the United Nations, WUSC and Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada: dedicated seats for university education in conjunction with permanent resettlement (IRCC, 2023; Student Refugee Program, 2021; Peterson, 2012). Because of its guarantee of permanent residency with a pathway to citizenship, WUSC is a very well-known program in refugee camps. Few spaces are offered yearly in each camp with an annual total of 150 students gathered from 40 countries (Student Refugee Program, 2021).

Since its creation in 1978, WUSC has sponsored over 2200 students coming from refugee camps into Canada in partnership with 100 campuses (Student Refugee Program, 2021). Adopting a students supporting-students model, financing for WUSC students' education is funded by a supplementary fee ranging from $1.00-$4.00 in addition to tuition for all students enrolled in partnered Canadian academic institutions (McKee et al., 2019; Peterson, 2012; Plasterer, 2011). The extent of financial support varies, depending on the university or college; some cover only the first academic year while others cover all years of education (Ghomeshi & Hyman, 2018). WUSC students are also supported through local committees consisting of students who volunteer their time to support new coming students. However, committee support and dedicated university services are only available for the first academic year (McKee et al., 2019). WUSC students' responsibilities increase exponentially after the completion of their first academic year, when all financial and social support

come to an end.

Purpose of the Study

The study's purpose was to understand and identify the main aspects of WUSC-sponsored students' integration, enrolled in a Canadian University. Central to the phenomenon is addressing the meaning of the students' lived experience in the WUSC program and how it shaped their integration in Canada. How did their life challenges affect their perceptions of themselves, their commitments to the program and to their families, as well as their dreams and future plans? What were the defining moments that they identified as pivotal in their integration process?

Literature Review

Most WUSC-sponsored students have spent a significant portion of time if not their entire lives living in refugee camps under significant restrictions, including limited access to nutritional daily food rations, quality education, and effective health care (Hynie, 2018). People forcibly displaced may have witnessed armed conflict, war, the killing and kidnapping of family members, experienced or witnessed violence, and even lacked food and basic health services (Shakya et.al., 2012). Research has found that refugee youth have experienced trauma (Cameron, et al., 2016; Ehntholt & Yule, 2006) and have higher rates of mental illness compared to immigrant youth and children (Cameron et al., 2016; Fazel et al., 2012; Hynie, 2018), in addition to emotional and behavioral difficulties (Fraine & Mcdade, 2009; Ziaian et al, 2011). Thibeault et al. (2017) found that prior trauma experienced by newcomer youth, in addition to acculturative stress, affects how they experience new cultures in their host country, which consequently affects their levels of depression and anxiety. From the first day arrival, these young students face multiple transitions and daily stresses adjusting to a new cultural context, education system, and social environment, while carrying the cumulative burden and stresses from past war trauma (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006; Ives & Sinha 2010). While the reality is that WUSC students are a "privileged" few and express gratitude towards Canada for the opportunity of resettlement and education, they still struggle with the transition process (McKee et al., 2019; Peterson, 2012).

Integration for refugees is achieved when they are fully engaged in all aspects of the new country, such as socially, economically and politically, in addition to having access to health, education, housing and all other services that citizens of the country benefit from (Fazel et al., 2012; Valtonen, 2004). Refugee participants in Plasterer's (2011) study referred to integration as a two dimensional process: social integration by feeling respected in the resettlement country and financial integration by being able to cover their expenses and send remittances to their families who remain in refugee camps. As a setting for integration, schools are the most important place for youth refugees and immigrants regarding inclusion; it is where they have their first prolonged contact with their new community (Cameron et al., 2016; Korntheuer et al., 2018). Schools offer refugees positive routines that help them have predictable patterns, leading to a sense of security, hope for a better future (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017; Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007), and a reduced risk of depression (Fazel et al., 2012). Positive school experiences give better psychological and social outcomes (Geltman et al., 2005; Thibeault et al., 2017). Education may be a greater priority to WUSC-sponsored students than most, given that

their academic success not only carries all their hopes and dreams of a better life but also those of their families who they have left behind in refugee camps. Their status as a landed immigrant means that they are eligible to sponsor family members, which ultimately relies on their successful educational pathway, financial autonomy and integration (IRCC, 2023).

Currently, there is very limited literature specific to university-sponsored students such as those resettled through WUSC. Peterson (2012) addressed the personal experience of a professor with WUSC students at the University of British Columbia. His findings underscored the importance of understanding the meaning of WUSC-sponsored students' lived experience to ensure an efficient partnership with the students and facilitate transformative learning. A survey report from Ghomeshi and Hyman (2018) concluded that many WUSC participants successfully completed their studies (94%), were employed at the time of the study (78%), were satisfied with their jobs (69%), felt a sense of belonging to their city and to Canada (70%), reported good mental health (93%) and were, overall, well integrated and satisfied with their lives. However, interview results from the same study suggested a disproportionate and higher number of non-graduates, when compared to survey results, where participants divulged that many of their peers dropped out of university because of financial difficulties and/or were found to develop feelings of isolation and loneliness, complain of stress, and develop mental health problems.

Ethics

Research Ethics Board approval was obtained from the University's Research Ethics Board (REB File # 21-07-028).

Methodology

Phenomenology is a philosophical assumption that aims to understand people's experiences in the way they experience it (van Manen, 2017). The researcher advocates for the need to consider human beings' subjective interpretations, their perceptions of the world (their life-worlds), as our starting point in understanding social phenomena (Granek, 2013). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a study of inner experiences "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p75). Therefore, this study adopted a qualitative descriptive phenomenological approach to understand the essence of WUSC students' lived experience of integration and settlement through the program and how their experiences shaped their integration (Burns & Grove, 1997; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Given that the study participants are university students of intellectual capability and with a specific background and life-experience, descriptive rather than interpretive phenomenology was adopted to remain true to participants' perceptions of their resettlement process and education. Given descriptive phenomenology is important in areas where little is known (Morrow et al., 2015), it can therefore shed light on WUSC students' strengths and needs in their integration process, as conditions can greatly differ from those of other private sponsorship programs.

Methods

Recruitment

Purposive sampling was employed to seek out individuals with direct experience of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Jones et al., 2022). A criterion sampling strategy was used to recruit participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Jones et al., 2022); criteria were enrolment in a Canadian university, participation in WUSC program, and availability for study participation. Recruitment information was first shared with the university's WUSC local committee, who then shared it with the students.Participants then reached out via email and booked an appointment at their convenience. Signed consent prior to the interviews and verbal consent at the beginning of each interview was sought and received.

Sample

The purpose of this research was not to generalize findings to a bigger group but to focus on the quality of the data to have a deeper understanding of the experience of the participants (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). Therefore, the study was limited to three WUSC male participants at a large Canadian university, of 22 and 25 years of age originating from different countries. Two of the participants required two interviews each (Morse, 2000) in order to dive into their multifaceted experience. This aligns with other phenomenological research, where the number of participants can vary from 1 to 20 (Jones & Lavallee, 2009; Morse, 2000; Moustakas, 1994). Morse (2000) even went further by setting an inverse relation between the number of participants and the number of interviews, limiting the depth of the data. All participants had completed their first year sponsored by WUSC at the time of the study. Two were still enrolled in university education and the third had recently graduated within the past five years. None spoke English as a first language. They had all lived in refugee camps between 7 and 18 years prior to resettling in Canada.

Data collection

Qualitative data were collected using an unstructured interview guide which included questions on themes such as their journey into the program, pivotal moments, the transition process from the camps to Canada, and their perceived challenges and facilitators after arrival. One in-depth interview was conducted with each participant; a second interview was conducted for two participants who wanted more time to deeply reflect on the questions. Interviews were done online via Skype and Zoom, between February and July 2021, lasting between 60-90 minutes. An external device was used to audio record the interviews for verbatim transcription purposes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants were given a pseudonym not connected in any way to their identity. Field notes were also taken to provide another source of data; notes consisted of the first author's reflections and insights during the research process (Daley, 2010).

Data analysis

Themes that were common to all participants were manually coded and clustered to reveal the essence of participants' experience in WUSC (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through a descriptive phenomenological lens, researchers read the transcripts multiple times to detect all sentences that connected to WUSC students'

experiences. Thus, the meaning of the lived experience was formulated through themes (Morville & Jessen-Winge, 2019) and meaningful moments (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas,1994). Themes highlighted were: "what are the students' experience of integration?" and "how do they experience it through their educational pathways?" (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Descriptive bracketing was applied throughout the research (Husserl, 1931; Gearing, 2004). According to Husserl (1931), in phenomenology, the researcher should approach their study by limiting any predisposed ideas or thoughts in order to focus on the description of the phenomenon. It is essential to bracket ourselves and deeply engage with the meaning as derived by the participants (Paley, 1997). Therefore, investigators suspended their past knowledge and experience to understand the meaning of the lived experience at a deeper level (bracketing our beliefs, feelings and perceptions; Gearing, 2004).

Trustworthiness

Verification, credibility, and triangulation were applied throughout the study, following Lincoln and Guba's (1986) framework. Verification was obtained through bracketing and field notes (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2019). Credibility was obtained with prolonged engagement and by being aware of researchers' positionalities. Triangulation was achieved through member checking by sharing transcripts, coding and partial analysis with participants for them to reflect on and provide feedback. Peer review and debriefing were also employed with faculty colleagues.

Findings

Three themes emerged to reveal the essence of participants' experience of integration while enrolled in a Canadian University: 1) disconnections and resulting challenges; 2) connections andresulting benefits; and 3) "life changing". The first theme describes a feeling of being set back, brought on by difficulties faced in navigating their surroundings and their educational setting. These difficulties include financial struggles, feelings of loneliness, and exposure to oppression and marginalization. The second theme represents the social support felt by the participants through interactions with their peers and WUSC volunteers, giving them a sense of "family". The third and final theme refers to participants' motivation and hopefulness following their arrival to Canada, expressed by a new sense of security and certainty, but also the realization of the hard work awaiting them in order to achieve their goals.

Theme 1: Disconnections and resulting challenges

When asked about challenges they had experienced, Andi, Cami and Henry all mentioned difficulties in adapting and processing a great deal of information in a short period of time. They added that they had stressful moments and experienced loneliness, especially in their second year after the termination of their sponsorship, which made them feel disconnected and overwhelmed.

According to participants, everything was different in Canada including things as simple as how to interact with people, due to cultural differences. As Andi stated:

Like, you are processing a lot of things because everything, from the small thing, from how to open even the doors is different from where we came. […] We're also processing, not only like what's surrounding us, we are also processing like how people are acting, how they are talking, what they are doing, where they are going, because it is a different culture and so, we are processing a lot of things.

University education is hard for everyone, but for WUSC students it is harder given that the education system available in the refugee camps is different from the one in Canada. Getting to know how to use small things such as the printer was a challenge in itself. As Cami mentioned:

a WUSC student does not have the basic knowledge of very simple things, how simple things like that. For example, it took me almost a month without using printer. [...] A new education system, you will sit in class with students who are coming from Cegep, college and you directly from high school. Your high school is totally a different thing.

Henry mentioned:

everything…you do it online, you have to do your assignments online, you have to do all your readings online, you have to… like you really have to navigate a lot of these systems, right? But I've never used a computer, I've never owned a computer before. All of a sudden, I have to get used to all this kind of stuff. This was really challenging.

Furthermore, dropping out from school due to hard financial situations was the main concern for WUSC students. They struggled to commit to all of their responsibilities in their new home, such as covering their expenses, and supporting their families back home. Financial obligations put them in a situation where they felt as though they had to choose between working and studying. As Cami reflected:

But when you are just in university, you are not getting good grade, financial life is hard, people need you back home to do A and B. You get stuck, and some students they have to get out of school because, that, you know, love for studies, that dream they had, in school is killed. If they are not getting good grades.

Financial struggles were most significant after the termination of their sponsorship, following the end of their first academic year, and persisted until graduation. It hindered their ability to integrate in their new environment. The expectation of financial independence starting from the second year following WUSC refugee students' arrival to Canada is too soon. As Henri mentioned:

So, your first year you're trying to adapt to it, you're trying to figure out, you're trying to find your footing, right. All of a sudden, on the second year, you realize that "Oh! I have to pay the bills. I have to pay my rent and, I have to do all these things. [...] So, yeah, so, that's like… that's like a very big… that's a very big challenge. That's very stressful, that's a very stressful thing.

To alleviate some of the financial pressures, participants felt compelled to find work while studying. Andi and Cami expressed how the difficulty in finding a job further burdened their experiences of financial hardship. They recounted having to apply to multiple jobs before being hired. As Cami said: "I remember before I got to work at FedEx, I had applied more than 10 times and I gave up". This situation was further complicated by the COVID pandemic in Canada, given there were less available job offers and the students

were faced by further financial strains when a family member would get infected with COVID and needed some extra money to cover medical services, as medical care is not provided back in the refugee camps. Consequently, they had to deny themselves a lot of basics, such as schoolbooks. As Cami mentioned:

According to my own experience, I find the financial situation pretty hard. You really have to make sure you, you deny yourself a lot of stuff. To the extent that you don't have to buy a book, you have the class, you need to buy a book, but you know if you buy a book, rent will be hard on you. And books are costly, it's 200$ so you have to really try to borrow, try to listen, especially during the COVID class. One of your siblings has COVID, and then the health system in, back in Africa [...] you have to really pay for your expenses so, such situations, you know, have a great, great impact on WUSC students, more than any other.

Participants made the link between their financial situation and integration. When the financial aspect is hard, integration is hard. Indeed, most institutions require English or French language proficiency, of which WUSC students have limited prior knowledge. As Andi mentioned:

For the second year. Because normally what happens is, we are somehow different [from] other provinces because most of the WUSC students, they don't speak [English or French] so…it is they are not likely to get good job in [city] for the second year and it is still too early to integrate.

Additionally, not only did a lack of host-country language proficiency increase their financial strain by limiting their access to jobs, but it also exposed them to discrimination. Henry said:

Even like, this is something about [people from the province], right? [They] will segregate you, mostly if you don't speak [the language], they're going to discriminate against you, right? Yeah, it's like mind blowing. I'm like "okay, fine man".

In fact, one incident happened inside the university. A student came up to Cami and his coworker and asked them to return to their country so that he could be happier. According to Cami, other WUSC students might also get discriminated against, but they do not have a space to discuss it. As Cami mentioned:

he was like, I will be so happy if you guys can go back to your countries [shocked laugh]. And then, we didn't expect that, so we just laughed it off, and, just, immediately when he said that he walked away so we just laughed it off. We kept working, but we told the supervisor [...] What I think happens most of the time is that, when an individual experiences this discrimination, they don't find a platform to talk about it. Because these are not, like, stories to like, you know, you just come in, you sit down and converse about it with your friend.

Henry mentioned that other subtle incidents would occur inside the classroom as well. These microaggressions were often difficult to point out but nevertheless made him feel left behind and segregated. Henry stated:

I was saying that most of these things are very subtle. It's things I cannot point to, it's like you're in group project, you're trying to get the point, everyone keeps shouting at you or like, your points get overlooked…like, multiple times. And somebody raises the same point and people received it as if it's a genius idea. I'm like, "Yo! I literally said that thing like ten minutes ago, none of you, like, listened to my idea" [...] So, there's a lot of subtle words, subtle… subtle segregation of ideas. Like, pushing you behind and not recognizing you or even not trying to associate with you.

Ultimately, we find an impact on the students' education and the dreams that accompany them. Prior high expectations of their involvement in WUSC turned swiftly into discouragement, negative thoughts and weigh

on the students' mental health. As Cami mentioned:

So, you have the biggest thing the school is hard but there are even little things that they give you hard time so far mostly in having all these small, small complications small hardship combined with the bigger one make your high expectations about the place, turn around, and you know you start questioning yourself, how will I survive, how will I adapt to this. That will have, you know, a very negative impact on, on, on how you view your new life, your new place and you know this usually happens as soon as you come. So, your high expectation changes swiftly, changes within the blink of an eye, so, and you know, you will get discouraged [...] So, and when you think negatively about all this… that you can't walk out by yourself, it's gonna affect your mental health, you will start, you know, life is going to be hard, I can't do this, I don't have the ability to do that. And, these negative thoughts, overtime and over again, you know, can really tie you down not to make a good progress in your school.

All participants mentioned having feelings of loneliness and no one to talk to or consult during their second year. With the termination of their sponsorship, not only do their responsibilities quickly increase, but they also lose their point of contact for guidance and support when the WUSC local committee and volunteers return home or become occupied with summer jobs. In the quote below, Cami described how his summer and second academic year felt lonely and how he struggled to navigate the system on his own. Cami said:

So I was in the position whereby somebody like [social work intern name] had a class and that worked social studies and those ended in April, her classes ended, so we'd never had that communication again so, entirely, the whole summer, I was staying alone. So, having some various questions about how to apply for [Student Financial Assistance] was hard because WUSC students were, some were here, some were at work, some like [another WUSC student] had to fly back home.

Cami felt a void from the absence of the social work intern, whose support and helpfulness was no longer available at the end of the winter semester. Likewise, his other contacts from the program were also away, adding to his loneliness. In response to this situation, Cami made a suggestion:

The whole summer I had no communication with WUSC [...] But I think WUSC should do one thing whereby the committee does not serve as an executive team but also as a community like, as a community [...] Because that staying alone, nobody knows where they are, they are making their own decisions.

He described how helpful it would be for the WUSC committee to serve as a community, so that they can offer better support by checking up on WUSC students to see how they are doing, where they are staying and be overall more accessible to provide guidance during important decision-making moments, to keep them from doing mistakes.

Overall, challenges, moments of disconnection and lack of belonging to WUSC were a central feature of the participants' realities in the program. These include challenges related to school itself, finding work, host-country language proficiency, financial precarity in light of commitments to family back home, and discrimination. In addition, the stressful moments, feeling of loneliness and lack of communication with the WUSC committee felt by the students were associated with moments of disconnection and lack of belonging to the program. Together, these challenges pose a risk for their mental health and were shown to affect their adaptation and integration negatively.

Theme 2: Connections and resulting benefits

The participants made connections between a meaningful moment in their journey and a moment they felt connected to WUSC by referring to it as a sense of belonging, feeling safe, and feeling connected like a family. According to Cami, as early as finding out they had gotten the scholarship, they felt a sense of belonging. They were talking to people in the camps, as members of WUSC, to try to inspire them. Perhaps they could've potentially affected somebody's life. As Cami mentioned:

So that was a great, it was a great feeling when I got it. [...] So, that, I had a great sense of belonging at that time because I was like "I got this" so, I can now talk to students and hopefully, what I'm going to say may change somebody's life.

Another way the participants expressed meaningful connection was through the feeling of safety they experienced as soon as they arrived in Canada. They compared it to how unsafe and uncertain things felt back in the refugee camp. As Andi mentioned:

Yeah, like the meaningful moments was once you arrive in [city name], you feel safe because most of the time, like the refugee camps are not safe and it is full of uncertain things.

Indeed, arriving in Canada was seen as a joyous moment for Andi, where he was welcomed by WUSC's local committee, amongst whom some were speaking his mother tongue. As Andi described:

Once you are in [Canadian city's airport] you are welcome by WUSC local committee, yeah it's happy moment because some of the local committee do speak our like… our language.

There was a connection between speaking his mother tongue and feeling at home. Andi felt less estranged in this new country and more understood; he felt that he was still connected to his country of origin: "So, it was… it was kind of like oh we are still [in my country of origin]. These people speak my language, especially the former SRP students".

Andi, Cami, and Henry described a moment they felt connected and belonging to WUSC by having a sense of family. WUSC is their only family in Canada and they are connected to them through simple actions of supporting and caring for each other, just as relatives would. As Andi mentioned:

So, like… I mean like, when I say family like connected, like related to, especially there are some moments like in the first week when one of our WUSC students get sick and we have to take to hospital so, I remember like the local committee like they went too with us on that time, like when we came out of the hospital. Like, there were some who prepare food, everyone was around, and I was like "oh, we are not alone here". So, that's the moment I felt like oh we are connected to WUSC and WUSC is a family. That's the only family we have here.

The participants also made a connection between feeling connected and integrated in their new place, to the support they got from the social work intern students. As Cami stated:

[Social work intern],…. did a good job. And that's what [another social work intern] is doing right now … verry good job. That one is something I really appreciate, and I think most WUSC students really appreciate, and I think all WUSC students appreciate it because it's create a very good integration into the Canadian community.

In conclusion, it was clear that WUSC students developed a sense of belonging to the program even before leaving the refugee camps. Suddenly, they had a bigger purpose, certainty, and a new sense of security. Central to the theme is the social support offered by former WUSC students, especially from the ones who spoke their home-languages. In addition, their local committee and the social work intern had a positive impact on the student's integration and their strategies to cope in their new environment. Overall, they summarize the meaning of their experience with the WUSC Committee, former students and social work interns as "feeling like a family".

Theme 3: Participation as "life changing"

Participants described their time in WUSC as a life changing and transformative moment for them, referring to their arrival in Canada as a new opportunity for a better life. They had high expectations for themselves, but quickly the realization dawned that a great deal of work awaited them before they could reach their goals. From the moment they found out they had been accepted into the WUSC program, the students were certain for the very first time that their life would change for the better. They were no longer refugees, they were individuals with a new starting point to plan and build their own and their family's future. As Cami mentioned:

So, WUSC took refugee student is just a life changing. It is a very great opportunity that if you get it, you are going to see yourself as a different person, you start seeing yourself as a person whose life has changed… to the better.

Henry's comments echoed those of Cami:

So, you have like some sort of certainty that you're going to make it to Canada, right. So, the moment is really massive. It's a really pivotal moment in like, in any refugee's life because you know for the first time the… you… like… you have a chance of escaping the refugee camp, [..] so, it's really a transformative moment, not just for you but for the people around you [...].

Henry associated the moment of knowing he was accepted to WUSC as a pivotal and transformative moment, recognizing that meant he would be "escaping" the refugee camp and its conditions.

Cami also mentioned that he had high expectations regarding his enrollment in the WUSC program. However, he quickly realized that he had to work very hard to reach his expectations and to be able to support his family back home. Cami referred to the refugee camp as his home, since this is the place where his family lives. As Cami mentioned:

I had high expectations about life. But, at some point, I came to realise, I'm not yet there because, as a student you know you have to read, you have a lot of work to do and with the kind of life our people living back home, they needed me, they needed me to support them.

Cami was torn between working hard at school to achieve better grades and build the future he had hoped for or look for a job to support his family who are living in challenging circumstances. He further noted that

You really have to work hard to achieve good grades. But at the same time, you feel for the people you have left, you're totally living a different life and you really feel like[mumbling] you understand what they're going through".

The participants' experiences reflect the sometimes ambivalence in making meaning of their experiences as both life-changing and fraught with tension and expectations that were sometimes difficult for the participants to navigate. While the WUSC participants voiced an important sense of attachment to their new beginning in Canada, they are torn by their past in the refugee camps through separation and concern for their families.

Discussion

The three themes composed the essence of integration as experienced by participants. The phenomenon of integration was multifaceted in that it comprised challenges, facilitators and life changing moments.

First theme, disconnections and resulting challenges can be understood by looking at two different timeframes. When they first arrived, participants mentioned that it was very challenging to process a great deal of information in a very short period of time, whether it was a new education system, culture, healthcare and employment paperwork, or navigating an unknown city. Before learning to excel in school, they had to learn how to use a computer and a printer. These findings agree with current literature, demonstrating that from day one of arrival, these young students continue to face multiple transitions and daily stress in order to adjust to the new culture, education system, and social environment, while carrying the cumulative burden and stress from the time spent at the camps (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006). In fact, the students remained linked to the refugee camps through their family members that stayed behind and for whom the participants were shown to worry about on a daily basis. As of their second-year, financial struggle was at its peak and persisted until the end of their degree. After the termination of their sponsorship, they become responsible for every aspect of their life, especially financially. They must shift their focus on how to survive, and learn to be mindful with their money, otherwise paying their rent and covering their expenses will become an issue. Unfortunately, the participants' educational pathways and integration process get negatively influenced by their financial struggles. Aligned with Ghomeshi and Hyman's (2018) report, financial issues were a big challenge for WUSC students, especially after the termination of the first-year scholarship. In some cases, students even drop out of universities due to financial difficulties (Ghomeshi & Hyman, 2018). Indeed, one of our participants mentioned having considered leaving school, not because he had a better alternative, but to address his financial struggles. This would be problematic given that school is a crucial aspect to help refugee youth heal and have a higher self-esteem, since it is a place where they can have trusting and safe relationships with their classmates (Fazel et al., 2012) and a link to the whole community (Cameron et al., 2016).

Furthermore, schools are more crucial to WUSC students than most, where they have their first and most prolonged contact with their new community (Thibeault et al., 2017). Overall, the financial situation had an immense impact on WUSC students' integration, diminished their hope of building a better future for themselves and their families, and negatively impacted their mental health. Similarly, Hynie (2018) mentions that limited financial resources and inadequate housing have a negative impact on refugees' mental health. Therefore, a significant support system is crucial for these students (Fraine & Mcdade, 2009). This also raises questions as to the support they are getting from WUSC and if the local committee or other members of society should offer more support to help them resettle and integrate in their new communities.

Furthermore, adding to all of these stressful conditions, the students face another obstacle throughout their educational pathways and settlement process: the fact that they are a visible minority. Indeed, WUSC students,

being mostly black, are subject to an increased risk of exclusion from their peers in the school, and potentially from the whole society (Hussain & Jones 2021; Stephens & Rock Vanloo, 2020). According to Stephens & Rock-Vanloo (2020), black social work students experience oppression, racism, and marginalization in their classes. One participant mentioned an incident of discrimination that he encountered while doing his job at the university library. Another participant mentioned that subtle incidents would occur, which are difficult to point at but nevertheless made him feel left behind and segregated. Of note, all participants were black, newcomers, refugees for most of their lives, and had an accent when speaking English. While examining all these identities and basing ourselves on literature, the participants were victims to oppression, racism and microinsults by their classmates (Morgaine & Capous-Desylas, 2020). This accumulation and repetition of different kinds of instances of racism and oppression could consequently negatively impact WUSC students' school success, their high expectations, their integration and overall, their resettlement process. (Dumbrill & Ying Yee, 2019; Morgaine & Capous-Desylas, 2020).

The second theme, connections and resulting benefits, were described using phrases such as "feeling like a family", "feeling connected", "feeling safe" and having a sense of "belonging to WUSC". Participants felt supported by finding others speaking their home language in Canada, making it easier for them to communicate and offering them a sense of familiarity. They felt as if they were still "home" with their people. WUSC students expressed feeling safe from the moment they arrived in Canada, differing from their time in the refugee camps. What is interesting about this theme is that all moments of connection for the three participants related to their first year in Canada, the year where they were supported by WUSC financially and socially, and before leaving the refugee camps. They felt a sense of belonging when introducing the WUSC program to other people in their camps and the care and support they received from the local committee and social work interns, despite the differences in culture, made them feel safe. Specific to the study site is the support offered by social work interns, who follow the students throughout the first academic year to further assist them and provide them with emotional, social and academic support. Of note, one of the participants did not have access to the support offered by the social work interns, which was only available as of 2017. Nevertheless, social support was a central aspect of the theme. Indeed, it has been shown that social support in the country of resettlement has a significant impact on refugees' wellbeing (Ives, 2007). According to the participants, support received by both the social work intern and the WUSC local committee helped them integrate in their new environment, agreeing with findings in the literature (Plasterer, 2011). It allowed them to feel engaged and attached. As demonstrated by Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015), the quality and the amount of support youth refugees are offered from their new communities highly influence their integration, even when dealing with refugees with identical histories of trauma and past living difficulties. Positive integration and social support are associated with psychological benefits (Berry & Hou, 2020; Ekblad, 1993), in addition to a better sense of belonging, which leads to overall well being (Berry & Hou, 2020).

The third theme, "life changing", was the phrase participants unanimously used to describe the WUSC program experience and allowed for a more economically, and in many cases, physically, secure future for participants and their families "back home". While on many occasions they referred to the refugee camps as their "home", this aligned with current literature as it represents the place where their families still lived and where they still had social, economic and cultural connections (Dryden-Peterson & Giles, 2012). Nevertheless, their appreciation of their new home in Canada is emphasized by what they lacked in the camps, such as a sense of security and certainty for a better future through access to education and benefits from their new

status as Canadian permanent residents (e.g., healthcare). While the WUSC program remains the only one yet to offer both education and resettlement, benefits of education during resettlement was shown in the literature where younger students not only considered their schools as a source of learning, but also as a facilitator to better understand their country of resettlement (Selimos & Daniel, 2017).

To conclude, participants' experiences indicate the need for more follow up after the termination of their sponsorship, which lasts for only one academic year. The first year is too early to integrate and process all the information around them. Another path to improvement would be offering more financial support during the second academic year, considering the level of host-country language proficiency needed for jobs, among other factors. Additionally, more social support should be offered and they should be kept included in the WUSC committee, which could eventually serve as a community. These students also need more academic support to smooth their adaptation to the Canadian education system.

Limitations

There were several study limitations. First, there was no gender distribution in the sample. This is mostly structural: a majority of WUSC students are male due to their access to highly competitive candidacy exams and limited female entry to the program (Peterson, 2012). Indeed, secondary school resources for females are limited compared to those for males in the same refugee camps (Peterson, 2012). Another limitation was the time of the interviews. Participants were busy with their exams and assignments, which might have affected their deep reflections on the questions. It was time consuming for the participants to reflect on their transcripts and the preliminary analysis, especially since they participated voluntarily. Virtual interviews compared to in-person interviews could also put the data collection at risk by losing some of the participants' expressions of embodiment and emotion that accompany their responses (Adams-Hutcheson & Longhurst, 2016). Internet connection was also a considerable challenge and might have caused some distractions. Turning the camera off in the middle of one interview to maintain the internet connection made it hard to track facial or nonverbal reactions, an important aspect of qualitative research (Mirick & Wladkowski, 2019). Additionally, given the limited sample size of three participants from the same University, results cannot be generalized to all WUSC sponsored students, accounting for over 2200 participants across Canada. Nevertheless, our study results agree with the report of Ghomeshi and Hyman (2018) in terms of financial difficulties and loneliness, providing further insight on their lived difficulties and what shapes their sense of belonging to Canada. Further research with a greater number of participants is required to support these findings and better understand how the program shapes their experience of resettlement and education, to ultimately identify where change is appropriate.

Conclusion

Unique to this study, is understanding through descriptive phenomenology WUSC-University sponsored refugee youth's life challenges, the meaning of the students' experience in the WUSC program and how it influenced their integration and resettlement in Canada. Study results indicate that WUSC is a life changing and great opportunity for a better life for the students and their families. However, the refugee students face

multiple challenges with the potential to negatively influence their educational pathways and jeopardize their entire resettlement process. The future implications of these findings would be to adapt the support offered to WUSC students in relation to the needs and concerns voiced by the students themselves to ensure attainment of the desired program outcomes, especially regarding higher education and resettlement.

Disclosure statement

The authors have no potential conflict of interest to report.

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Children of Irregular Migrants: the Exclusionary Logic of the Education System

Written by Emma Dutu, edited by Xining Wu.

Introduction:

With the recent election of President Donald Trump, obsessive policies about migration reached international headlines, often disregarding children to focus on the 'wrongdoing' of their parents. But in the realm of international labor migration, where people move across borders and cultures, ensuring the application of human rights for all is crucial. At the heart of this discourse lies a fundamental concern: the denial of access to education for migrant children. Article 30 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) declares that "Each child of a migrant worker shall have the basic right of access to education on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Access to public preschool educational institutions or schools shall not be refused or limited by reason of the irregular situation with respect to stay or employment of either parent or by reason of the irregularity of the child's stay in the State of employment" (CMW 1990). The denial to this fundamental educational right not only goes against the principles underlined in the CMW but also contributes to the perpetuation of systemic injustices that continues to marginalize irregular migrants. The International Organization for Migration defines a person in an irregular situation as someone who crosses or has crossed an international border without authorization to enter or stay in a state, according to the state's laws and international agreements (IOM 2006). The term "irregular" is preferred over "illegal" as the latter carries a criminal connotation, while the former simply indicates that the person has violated administrative regulations. This distinction is crucial as it underscores the administrative nature of the violation without stigmatizing individuals or implying criminal intent.

Education plays a pivotal role in promoting social inclusion and fostering cohesive societies. Providing migrant children with access to education eases their integration into host communities and mitigates the risk of marginalization and social exclusion. Moreover, it empowers individuals by equipping them with knowledge and skills to navigate and advocate for their rights within their host countries. As such, education is a crucial tenet of migrant rights that needs to be protected and enforced as a way of hindering cycles of poverty and disadvantage.

Through empirical examples and analysis, this paper seeks to highlight the structural barriers that hinder migrant children's access to education, and proposes solutions aimed at upholding their rights and fostering inclusive societies. Ultimately, addressing this violation is not only a matter of legal obligation but a moral imperative to ensure equality for all.

Denial of Access to Education: Understanding the Violation

The denial of access to education for migrant children constitutes a blatant violation of their fundamental

human rights. This violation, rooted in systemic barriers within education systems, perpetuates cycles of marginalization and impedes the integration of migrant communities. Article 30 of the CMW specifically addresses this issue, emphasizing the importance of guaranteeing access to education for migrant children on an equal basis with the children of the host country. It prohibits the refusal or limitation of access to public preschool educational institutions or schools based on the irregular situation of the child or their parents' stay or employment status. By recognizing the importance of education in fostering social inclusion and promoting the well-being of migrant children, Article 30 serves as a crucial safeguard against discrimination and exclusion within education systems.

Article 30 goes merely beyond a legal framework: it represents the principle of equality and non-discrimination upheld in international human rights law. By affirming the right of migrant children to education, Article 30 reinforces the notion that education is a fundamental human right that should be accessible to all, regardless of their migration status. It is important to note that migrant children did not ask to move countries: as such, they should not be penalized for a situation that they didn't choose. Article 30 enforces this concept of equality by allowing the children to have access to knowledge, and thus to be able to contribute to society in their future.

It has been shown in this section that the denial of access to education for migrant children represents a grave violation of their human rights, as articulated in Article 30 of the CMW. Understanding this violation requires a holistic examination of the systemic barriers and discriminatory practices within education systems, as well as a thorough analysis to identify solutions that can be implemented to ensure inclusive education policies that can uphold the rights of migrant children

Institutional Barriers to Equal Education Opportunity

Institutional barriers within education systems perpetuate the denial of access to education for migrant children, contributing to their marginalization and exclusion. These barriers manifest in various forms, including discriminatory policies and insufficient support services.

First of all, it is essential to consider that irregular migrants, by definition, are not legally registered within the host country. Schools require a certain amount of administrative procedure to ensure the enrollment of a child within its infrastructure. Consequently, many migrants may hesitate to enroll their children in government-regulated schools due to the fear of deportation. This apprehension results in their inability to register their children in schools with academically qualified infrastructures, thereby denying them equal opportunities compared to local children. This fear has been notably prevalent in the United States, where the reinforcement of immigration enforcement measures has instilled fear of potential raids leading to apprehension among thousands of families (Wiltz 2016). This was the case of Alex, a sophomore in high school, who scribbled drawings on a desk with the name of his hometown in Honduras and the name of his high school mascot (Kim Pack et al. 2022). Following a three-day suspension, Alex was deported back to Honduras by immigration officials who believed he posed a threat to the country, believing the doodles were in reality gang symbols (Kim Pack et al. 2022).

This single case can attest to the banality of those deportations, and serves as the representation of the danger that migrant children experience everyday. The insecurity of irregular children in schools thus increases

the probability that parents are keeping their children home from school, significantly impeding their prospects of academic success (Wiltz 2016). "The fear of deportation impacted student's sense of safety while at school. 85% of survey respondents reported students expressing concerns and fears they could be deported by ICE agents while on school grounds" (Gándara and Santibañez 2023). This exacerbates public safety concerns, as the fear of deportation serves as an institutional barrier hindering equal access to education for the children of irregular migrants.

Furthermore, inadequate resources and infrastructure in schools serving migrant communities further exacerbate their educational disadvantage (Bartlett, 2015, 15). In fact, unequal funding levels, as observed in the decentralized school funding system maintained in the United States, often result in significant disparities in educational quality. While the idea of creating personalized teaching depending on the children's needs sounds like a sustainable solution, meeting those specific needs requires additional financial resources that need to be effectively deployed (Bartlett 2015, 16). For instance, the British Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme targets students residing in disadvantaged urban areas, many of whom are migrants (Bartlett 2015, 16). This program offers support for teaching and learning, mentorship opportunities, and access to information and communication technology facilities, yielding overall positive results: "EiC has led to an improvement of 1.9 percentage points in the number of children reaching level 5 or above in key stage 3 mathematics. The estimate is higher in schools that have been in the programme the longest but still evident in schools that came into the programme later" (Machin, McNally, and Meghir 2005, 18). As such, by addressing funding disparities and targeting the distribution of resources effectively, governments can create more equitable educational opportunities for migrant children, enabling them to succeed academically.

As has been demonstrated, institutional barriers within education systems play a significant role in perpetuating the restriction of access to education for migrant children. These barriers to enrollment and adequate education can have long-lasting effects on the children, thus requiring the urgent need for the implementation of practical solutions.

Consequences of Denial of Access To Education

Denying the access to education for migrant children creates long-lasting consequences that can affect both the individuals and the society as a whole. Understanding these consequences is essential for grasping the seriousness of the violation, as well as its broader implications for social cohesion and human rights as a whole.

At the individual level, the denial of access to education deprives migrant children of essential opportunities for learning, personal development, and social integration. Without access to quality education, these children face barriers to social mobility and economic participation, limiting their ability to contribute meaningfully to society. They are more likely to experience limited socioeconomic prospects, increased vulnerability to exploitation, and diminished agency over their own lives (Weber 2007, 443). It is argued that poverty is a result of restricted access to educational opportunities (Weber 2007, 440). By facing the systemic barriers analyzed before, it becomes clear how irregular migrant students are forced to face unequal access to those opportunities. As such, the lack of potential educational attainment only exacerbates existing inequalities, and perpetuates cycles of poverty within migrant communities. Research has demonstrated that "more education is a path out of poverty: people with more education are less likely to be poor" (Weber 2007, 443). It

needs to be noted that the lack of educational opportunities perpetuates intergenerational cycles of disadvantage, as children born into marginalized migrant communities inherit the same barriers and inequalities. Therefore, providing children with the opportunity to enroll in school without the fear of putting at risk their family's irregular status is crucial for breaking the cycle of deprivation. By ensuring access to education, children can have the chance to realize their full socioeconomic potential, paving the way for greater opportunities and upward mobility.

Moreover, the denial of access to education undermines efforts to promote social cohesion and intercultural understanding as it fosters division and exclusion within society. The exclusion of migrant children from educational settings not only limits opportunities for intergroup contact but also reinforces societal divisions and stereotypes. Intergroup contact theory suggests that when individuals from different social, ethnic or cultural backgrounds engage in meaningful and cooperative interactions, it can reduce prejudice between each other and foster mutual empathy and understanding (Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman 2008, 9).

Schools serve as crucial spaces where children from diverse backgrounds come together, learn from one another, and build relationships that transcend cultural and ethnic boundaries. However, by denying migrant children access to education, it reinforces institutionalized racism by integrating discriminatory practices within the education system. This specific type of racism marginalizes migrant children based on their ethnic or cultural identities, thus limiting opportunities for meaningful interaction between different communities (Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman 2008, 9). As a result, stereotypes and misconceptions about migrant groups persist, fueling further discrimination and prejudice. Without exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences, both migrant and non-migrant children miss out on valuable opportunities to challenge internal working models and develop empathy and understanding for one another (Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman 2008, 9). Thus, it is by depriving migrant children of the tools and resources necessary to navigate and participate in society, that schools can be seen as inadvertently perpetuating systems of inequality and injustice, contradicting their fundamental principles of equality.

The denial of access to education for migrant children has profound consequences that reverberate across individuals and societies. Examining these consequences urges the need to address this violation and uphold the rights of all children, irrespective of their migration status.

Potential Solutions

Addressing the denial of access to education for migrant children requires comprehensive solutions that would have the capacity to empower them while allowing the retention of their heritage culture as a way to promote well-being and societal integration. Before considering solutions to improve schooling for migrant children, it is imperative to address the underlying fear of deportation that prevents many from enrolling in schools. President Donald Trump's administration has created fear among irregular migrants by permitting federal immigration agencies to conduct arrests in schools, discouraging many migrant families from sending their children to school in fear of detection and deportation (AP News, 2025). To ensure against this damaging fear, it is crucial to halt unwarranted raids and guarantee that any irregular child attending school is not targeted for deportation. Only by creating a safe and welcoming environment can migrant children fully access educational opportunities without the fear of repercussions. As such, the practice of exchanging data with

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) must be discontinued by school districts. School administrators need to be aware that there is no legal requirement for them to share data with immigration authorities, so that they can respect the privacy and security of unregulated migrants (Kim Pack et al. 2022). Facilitating the protection of information would tackle the problem of deportation to its root, and provide a safe environment for children to be part of, ensuring that every child, regardless of their migration status, has the legal right to education.

On the other hand, resource allocation and support services must be prioritized to ensure that schools serving migrant communities have the necessary resources and infrastructure. Adequate funding should be allocated to provide specialized support programs, such as language support classes, cultural orientation programs, and psychosocial support services. These services aim to facilitate the integration and academic success of migrant children. Taking the example of the British Excellence in Cities examined earlier, financial aid programs should be implemented in order to alleviate the costs of education that are erected as barriers to the registration of migrant children. Similarly, in the 1990s, the Netherlands implemented the Educational Priority Policy, a set of policies providing funding for low socio-economic and ethnic minority students, in order to encourage them to pursue their education by limiting the impact of their disadvantage on their studies (Driessen 2000, 58–60). Policies include the access to bilingual education with the minority language and Dutch, to facilitate the learning of other school subjects (Driessen 2000, 61–62). The provision of this bilingualism has been observed as playing a key role in the reconciliation of their mother tongue and the official language of the country, thus boosting children's self-confidence (Driessen 2000, 62). It is in turn this self confidence that promotes children's well-being and integration into society.

As such, addressing the denial of access to education for migrant children requires a holistic approach encompassing policy interventions and capacity-building initiatives. Implementing inclusive education policies and ensuring equal opportunities for all children fosters the principles of equality and human rights that are necessary within inclusive societies, allowing all children to feel confident in pursuing their full potential, regardless of their legal standing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the denial of access to education for migrant children represents a violation of their human rights, as outlined in Article 30 of the CMW. This restriction perpetuates systemic injustices, marginalizing irregular migrants and hindering their social integration in the economic sphere. However, addressing this violation requires the implementation of comprehensive solution that are focused on prioritizing the safety and wellbeing of migrant children, thus contributing to the creation of an inclusive education system that upholds the rights of all children, irrespective of their migration status. This includes halting unwarranted raids, discontinuing the exchange of data with immigration authorities, and allocating adequate funding and support services to schools sheltering irregular children. Consequently, ensuring a just access to education is not only a legal obligation, as seen in Article 30, but most importantly a moral obligation in fostering a more equitable society. By fostering intercultural understanding and helping in providing opportunities for meaningful interactions between individuals, stereotypes can be challenged, resulting in an inclusive society where all children would have the opportunity to unlock their full potential.

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Mapping Precarity: Female Migrant Domestic Workers & Health Equity in Lebanon

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Introduction

Health equity is a multifaceted concept that takes into account how social arrangements link health with other features of state affairs, as defined by Amartya Sen (Sen 2004, 661). Health is a key conception of social justice, and any iteration and understanding of justice involves an equity in the achievement and distribution of health. Understanding and establishing health equity stems from understanding that health inequality is a matter of interests (Sen 2004, 661).

Entrenched by many systemic inequalities and ramifications, those falling under the domestic migrant worker (MDW) status face considerable challenges in what is related to an equitable access to health treatments and services. The label MDW is a descriptive term referring to migrants who cross borders for employment purposes, and whose residency and rights in host countries is contingent on their employment status (United Nations 1990). Furthermore, MDWs tend to only access employer-specific and temporary contracts or arrangements (Fernandez 2018, 55). Such is the case of migrants under the Kafala system in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, such as Lebanon and Jordan or those under Canada's temporary foreign worker program (Strauss and McGrath 2017, 1). Ultimately, MDWs' status correlates to unequal health outcomes due to their disproportionate health access. However, there is not much clarity for how these vulnerabilities are constructed.

This analysis seeks to examine how the principal features of contemporary migration—feminization, irregularity, and contract labour—pose specific challenges to the protection of migrant rights and play a decisive role in shaping their disproportionate access to healthcare and health outcomes. More specifically, it investigates how these factors interact with pre-existing social structures and environments to exacerbate negative effects on health and access to medical services. Unequal health access and outcomes are considered as part of a broader strategy of tactical neglect and exclusion. Additionally, a gendered perspective is incorporated to assess how gender dynamics intensify this exclusion, particularly within the neoliberal framework of the feminization of labour.

Feminisation of labour is a growing trend in the current neoliberal landscape. It refers to the increasing incorporation of women in vulnerable occupational and social positions, with almost half of global migrants being represented by women (Saravanamuttu 2018, 2). Neoliberal migration demands a rising supply of cheap and flexible sources of labour (Saravanamuttu 2018, 2). Women have become one of the primary exploited groups, performing undervalued and precarious labour.

The discussion begins by framing the issue of health access and analyzing the intersection of migration characteristics, migrant status, and healthcare accessibility. By discussing the shortcomings of the International Convention of the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, it starts by revealing the weaknesses of that particular human rights legal framework. Later, using Lebanon as its empirical case, it explores how

irregularity intersects with social structures to produce conditions of vulnerable labour, characterized by limited healthcare access. By further discussing the situation of Female Ethiopian, the analysis reveals the role that race and gender play in the already precarious situation of MDWs, especially when it comes to accessing their sexual and reproductive rights.

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW)

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW), was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1990. It adopts a comprehensive human rights approach, with the purpose of setting a standard for all migrant workers, including those living or working abroad illegally. It details and lays out a specific set of civil, political, social and economic rights for migrant workers and their families (Ruhs 2017, 1).

The fundamental principles of international human rights treaties revolve around the ideas of universality and indivisibility; this means that all the rights guaranteed by such treaties are intended to apply universally, regardless of the identity or status of the right-holders. Additionally, they emphasise inalienability, meaning no individual can be excluded. The CMW takes this a step further by being rooted in the principle of equal rights, rather than merely setting a minimum standard of rights (Ruhs 2017, 16). For this reason, it is considered a more precise enforcement of migrant rights, as this approach aims at entitling migrant workers to the same rights as other inhabitants of the country, particularly citizens or regular workers, without any discrimination.

This demanding and inflexible approach explains the very disappointing level of ratification, being the least ratified major human rights convention (Ruhs 2017, 1). In an increasingly globalised world, which demands more labour mobility whilst simultaneously providing this growing number of migrants with rights, states are aware of this tradeoff between rights and openness. Consequently, placing restrictions on migrant rights furthers the national interests of nation-states, and helps put into perspective the poor adoption of this treaty.

This pattern is reflected in the case study, as Lebanon –a major migrant-receiving country– has not ratified the convention. The convention is also seen as a liberal immigration policy that constrains states' ability to regulate their migrant populations (Ruhs 2017, 18), and is perceived to limit their overall national and political sovereignty.

Focused on Article 28 of the CMW, the analysis seeks to tackle the application of one of the treaty's most fundamental rights: all migrant workers' right to medical care (United Nations 1990). Certainly, it is the only article in this convention that focuses on migrant workers' access to healthcare while taking into consideration their status. However, the article's legal phrasing poses significant constraints: because of its center around emergency medical care, which is ultimately up to the discretion of employers, Article 28 does not contain any indication on the required baseline of the specific level of healthcare access that MDWs are entitled to. Furthermore, this omission cannot be remedied by making 'emergency care' the alternative to standardized healthcare access. Additionally, the article also lacks a gender scope, which is very important in a wider backdrop of the feminisation of labour.

As a result, the recognition of these rights on paper does not translate to widespread access in practice. The CMW doesn't have many enforcement mechanisms written into it, which prevents measurements of

employment and compliance. Ultimately, these structural flaws translate into a weak legal framework effectively protecting MDWs' rights.

Framework of Understanding: a Macro View of MDWs' Restricted Access to Healthcare

Health and the capacity to thrive are deeply intertwined concepts. This being said, non-citizens do not have equal access to health services (Wild 2015, 162), and this is only exacerbated in the case of temporary foreign workers with precarious status. In the specific context of this paper, temporary workers are not naturalised citizens, in fact, this status is very out of reach. As a consequence, their access to healthcare is restricted on the basis of their contractual status (Wild 2015, 162).

This is reinforced by their 'othering,' a process of making a group or population separate, which is carried out through a process of racialising migrant workers, marking them as different by their physical and cultural characteristics (Lan 2006, 59). This is also magnified by their positioning in relation to non-foreigners, and other groups of foreigners, which Pei-Chia Lan coins as 'stratified otherisation' (Lan 2006, 60).

This process of otherization reinforces internalised hierarchies and marks MDWs as a different, inferior class, in the Middle East and Lebanon specifically. This imposed inferiority is informed by racial logics, which have roots in Lebanon's colonial history (Gonzalez Noveiri 2021, 3). This helps explain individual level discrimination, and why policy changes, legislations and treaties like the CMW are hard to enforce. Consequently, this treatment of MDWs is built into Lebanese social norms, becoming very hard to change.

These systems of migration, such as the Kafala system, actively work to restrict health access. The Kafala system is a neoliberal system of migration; a large-scale guest worker program through which employers can hire workers from abroad, by acting as their guarantor or sponsor (Parnas 2023, 49-50). It ties MDWs to their employers, making them completely reliant on their sponsors for access to basic services (Parnas 2023, 51). By doing so it removes the role of the government in mediating employer-employee agreements and privatises migration control. This is also cemented by social norms, and racialized hierarchies that put them in a position of an 'Inferior' being. The 'Inferior' vs 'Superior' is how employer-employee relations are perceived (Saad 2020, 37). Madams and employers reproduce these dynamics daily, viewing the MDWs as replaceable and disposable (Saad 2020, 37). This entrenched 'Us vs. Them' mentality becomes the justification for the exploitations under the Kafala system.

Migrants' temporary and contractual status allow states to constantly replenish the labour force with new bodies every few years (Saad 2020, 32), becoming their principal method of control. This constant turnover of employees is a form of withholding information about the employers, and workplace expectations. This information asymmetry makes it harder for MDWs to realise all the risks, access services, and seek help for health issues they face as they can be replaced at any moment for not being productive or imposing a—mostly financial—burden on their employer. They move abroad and operate in a racialised political economy as commodities.

In major migrant receiving countries, this works to enable the creation of a market of MDWs, which is based on the political premise that they are a 'disenfranchised class' (Saad 2020, 33). Without this, they wouldn't be able to withhold welfare access from workers. They are able to externalise the cost of welfare, so it is borne by their origin state. The immigration of migrant workers is closely regulated and controlled by the imposition

of a required medical examination (Saad 2020, 43). The host states can take advantage of a solely healthy population, to meet their labour demands. In other words, the exclusion from welfare services is carefully manufactured.

Hindering migrants' access to healthcare has serious long-term consequences for the welfare of migrants: it affects their labour market outcomes (Ruhs 2013, 126), it worsens their lived experiences, and reinforces their irregular status. This, in turn, traps them in a cycle of rights deprivation and limits their ability to improve their circumstances.

The Gender and Racial capitalism: Lebanon's Treatment of Female Ethiopian MDWs

Lebanon is home to many vulnerable communities, which include refugees, migrant workers, ethnic and religious minorities; all subject to systemic injustices. Even so, there is a stratification of society between marginalized communities. This has developed into an Us vs Them and Inferior vs. Superior mentality normalises the dehumanisation of MDWs (Saad 2020, 50).

Said stratification is reflected on the different treatments received by these communities, in areas such as healthcare access. As it has already been established, healthcare access for MDWs is less robust compared to Lebanese citizens. Furthermore, MDWs' access to healthcare is also weaker in comparison to other ethnic minorities, such as Palestinian and Syrian refugees that lack a normalized status within Lebanese society (Fernandez 2018, 160). This division across racial lines is an indicator of the intersection between oppressive structures: being part of a racialized minority, on top of being a MDW, further harms one's prospective access to healthcare.

However, when adding a gendered lens to the study of said divisions reveals an additional layer of oppressive structures. Take for instance the treatment of female Ethiopian MDWs in Lebanon (FEMDWs).

As a product of racialized capitalism and the commodification of labour, female Ethiopian MDWs are treated as expendable commodities in a market. As argued by Chazz Robinson and Raechele Pope, capitalist domination is interrelated and mutually reinforcing white supremacist structures and discourses, arguing that some human lives are more valuable than others (Robinson and Pope 2016, 245). Building on this critical racial approach, it is also essential to consider patriarchal structures, which intersect with racial oppression to compound the marginalization of racialized women, such as FEMDWs. The racialized capitalist approach ultimately justifies the uneven treatment of human lives on the basis of their different ascribed values (Babar and Vora 2022, 499). Even though Robinson and Pope do not consider capitalism to have been crafted as the operationalization of a deliberate racial project at its outset, it is a reality that patterns of racial distinction have been codified and reproduced into social structures and economic systems (Babar and Vora 2022, 499). In this system, temporary migration schemes and domestic labour are structured in a way that reproduces said racial —and by extent, gendered—hierarchies.

This lens offers a critical perspective to analyze the labour migration system, and understands how temporary migrations schemes operate. For instance, in the case of the Kafala system, countries operating under it profit from the labour of racialized persons by steeping stratified migration schemes into racism.

The migration and healthcare regimes help contextualise the position and status of FEMDWs in Lebanon. Despite Ethiopia's ban on migration to Lebanon due to several human rights abuses, it persists and FEMDWs

in Lebanon make up an astonishing 47% of the MDW workforce (Fernandez 2018, 156). This statistic also points towards the trend of feminization of labour, as women in Lebanon make up 99% of the migrant domestic workforce (Mehzer, Nassif, and Wilson 2021, 3). Additionally, as part of the Kafala system and the tying of migrants to their sponsors, MDWs are fully dependent on their individual providers to access basic services. In this regime, exclusion and discrimination are entrenched at the individual level too, becoming the premises of the migration regime.

Impact on the Access to Human Rights: Sexual and Reproductive Rights for FEMDWSs in Lebanese Healthcare and Society

The Lebanese healthcare system is known to be fragmented and pluralistic (Fernandez 2018, 156). Following the collapse of the public health sector during the 1990 civil war, reconstruction has been very slow, with out-of-pocket-expenditure rates being a low 44% in 2012 (Fernandez 2018, 156). Data reveals health insurance hardly covers the lowest quintile of the Lebanese population, financially (Fernandez 2018, 156). In this fragile healthcare system, services directed to FEMDW are limited to nonexistent, given that the healthcare system can hardly support Lebanese citizens. Consequently, the burden on healthcare is borne by MDWs individually or redirected to their origin country.

On top of that, individual discriminatory attitudes also impede their access to healthcare within a hospital setting. It is acknowledged clinicians have the power to overlook status, and give them equal treatment, but due to deeply ingrained social norms, this is not the case. It worsens their health when they seek aid in an emergency. This shows the issue is systemic and normative and it reinforces structural discrimination.

The combination of their migrant status and gender creates a distinctive level of vulnerability when it comes to FEMDWs' exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights. Their sexual lives are regulated, and pregnancy is ruled out as an option under the Kafala system, as pregnancy would cause female MDWs' status to become irregularised (Fernandez 2018, 157), and lose their claim to healthcare.

If MDWs are per se already part of a class considered as undeserving of citizenship due to deep-seated racial norms and biases (Gonzalez Noveiri 2021, 22), female MDWs' sexuality is constantly surveilled. Their reproductive health access and outcomes are curbed, posing direct barriers to their exercise of fundamental human rights because of their gender and race. As a result, as empirical evidence reveals, pregnant FEMDWs present a higher risk profile than citizens, they have a lower rate of obstetrical interventions, they present higher incidences of stillbirth and early neonatal death, and face an increased risk of maternal death (Gonzalez Noveiri 2021, 3).

In Lebanon, these dire circumstances also have the adverse effect of making FEMDWs dependent on the father and his migrant status. It takes away any autonomy and decision making power away from them, even if they had the resources, they'd be legally dependent on him. Their migrant status also makes the child illegitimate, and consigns them to a life fraught with precarity. A reduced access to healthcare aligns with the experiences of other minorities in Lebanon, but Syrian and Palestinian refugees are comparatively advantaged because their pregnancies are at least considered legitimate (Gonzalez Noveiri 2021, 158). They receive support from external organisations, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). The UNRWA addresses the specific situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, along with

educational, health and social services (Besson 1997, 339). This gives them an advantage socially, which matters a lot in a conservative society as Lebanon.

The trend of the feminisation of migration is correlated with women being overly represented in informal sectors (Fernandez 2018, 159). They work as contract labour, in the domestic sphere and access to services by MDWs on a contract is highly subject to the employer and their discretion. They determine their access to external connections and if they have support networks. Although they don't legally determine their access to these services, they act as soft roadblocks to their access, which shapes their treatment. These strategies used by the employer and state show how obstructing their health access is a collaborative effort of tactical neglect.

Conclusion

This analysis reveals how social discrimination at the individual level interacts with mechanisms of structural exclusion, ultimately compounding into a major crisis. Examining Lebanon's contextual variables—such as the Kafala System and prevailing social and racial norms—demonstrates the barriers that migrant domestic workers face. Additionally, the CMW fails to substantively protect these workers' human rights, particularly overlooking key issues in Article 28 of the Convention.

Focusing on Ethiopian female migrant domestic workers (FEMDWs), this analysis highlights how structural barriers deprive them of sexual and reproductive rights in Lebanon. However, this issue is not unique to Ethiopian workers. A deeper examination of local social norms and institutional oppression is essential for strengthening international human rights frameworks. Only then can migrant domestic workers' rights be meaningfully protected, ensuring their access to healthcare as a fundamental human right.

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Contrasting Refugee Protection. 'Norm Enforcers' in Canada and 'Norm Entrepreneurs' in Japan: Civil Society's Struggle Facing the Hegemonic Norm

Written by Momoka Takami, edited by Susana Baquero Salah.

Introduction

The urgent need for refugee protection has been acknowledged in the international and domestic spheres following the height of conflicts across the globe. However, the degree of the norm of protection differs globally, especially in cases where civil society influences its advancement through advocacy. The comparison between Canada and Japan is particularly interesting; in 2023, Canada accepted refugee claims of 37,222 asylum seekers out of 137,947 (Immigration And Refugee Board of Canada, 2024). During the same year, Japan accepted refugee claims of 303 asylum seekers out of 13,823, the highest number recorded in Japan's history (出入国在留管理庁 [Immigration Services Agency], 2024). Even though the former accepts significantly more refugees than the latter (supported by civil society in the private sponsorship), civil society in Japan has more autonomy as it objects to the state's passive behaviour towards accepting refugees.

This article highlights the differences in how civil society in Canada and Japan influences domestic refugee protection as a norm enforcer in the former and norm entrepreneur in the latter, revealing the complex relationship between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the state in international development. This article will begin by introducing the theory of a norm enforcer along with a case study of Canada, before proceeding to explore the definition of a norm entrepreneur together with Japan's case study.

Canadian NGOs as Norm Enforcers

Civil society, such as NGOs, can be categorized as either hegemonic norm enforcers or counter-hegemonic norm entrepreneurs. This distinction determines how they address social welfare and development in the public and private spheres. In Canada, NGOs involved in refugee protection often act as norm enforcers in different ways. This essay will begin by introducing the concept of a norm enforcer, followed by an analysis of Canada as a case study.

Explaining the Concept of Norm Enforcer

William Fisher (1997) explores how, as civil society became incorporated into the international development regime as an alternative to the failed top-down approach, its autonomy from the state became threatened. He contended that many NGOs are hegemonic organizations that reinforce norms set by the state and assist the state's development strategy. While they still provide resources to those in need in the private sphere, being advised by international organizations like the United Nations (UN), the critique is that this undermines the

potential of political solutions that could be utilized by the state. Simultaneously, they position the NGOs as entities separated from the state, making them appear apolitical so as not to contest either the hegemony or the status quo the state maintains in society. One way in which nonprofit civil society sustains itself is by obtaining financial assistance from the government or affluent transnational organizations. This limits civil society's autonomy in constructing their activism as they operate around the interest of the beneficiaries that provide financial capital. Through state funding, they become an enforcer of the state's interest and norms they believe are appropriate for the nation. This is advantageous to the state as they consistently try to reduce the autonomy of the NGOs to minimize their influence on citizens when they conflict with the state's interest (Fisher 1997, 446-454).

The Case of Canada

Despite the autonomous nature of civil society, Canadian NGOs comply with the hegemonic discourse of refugee acceptance diffused by the Canadian government and the UNHCR, making them apolitical norm enforcers. Private sponsorship, one of the refugee protection programs in Canada, has established an interdependent relationship between the state, the UNHCR and civil society for the neoliberal strategy, which made civil society the norm enforcer (Ritchie 2018, 667). A few countries accept private sponsorship to facilitate the resettlement of refugees who fled their countries (Hyndman et al. 2021, 3). Canada is a leading country for this program despite the increasing negative sentiment towards refugees in the political and social spheres as opposed to positive norms towards immigrants (Hyndman et al. 2021, 3). The Canadian government welcomes asylum seekers with the UNHCR, assigning them to local sponsors that provide refugees with financial assistance and resources as they aim for social integration and independence during their first year in Canada (Ritchie 2018, 667-68).

Since the program's introduction in the 1970s, it has become a state-led neoliberal strategy as the government increases refugee acceptance while minimizing the state's involvement and public spending (Ritchie 2018, 669). The state takes advantage of civil society's willingness to commit to refugee protection to outsource the cost of accepting refugees (Ritchie 2018, 668-69). Research revealed that sponsors feel a responsibility as global citizens to devote their resources to refugees whose human rights were abused in their home countries despite the high burden this represents (Hyndman et al. 2021, 4–6). Their commitment derives from psychological pressure and faith to help people (Hyndman et al. 2021, 6). Many also fled to Canada not necessarily as refugees themselves but, upon arrival, sponsored relatives seeking safe resettlement in Canada (Hyndman et al. 2021, 6). This poses a problem for private sponsorship, a scheme promoted by the Canadian state as an opportunity for civil society to help refugees, but the reality is that the program exploits the labour, human and financial capital of private sponsors to avoid financing refugee protection programs and using their federal budget (Ritchie 2018, 670). The responsibility to protect refugees through sponsorship is shared by the UNHCR, the Canadian government, and civil society, which are sponsors. This implies that civil society is embedded in the hegemonic discourse of refugee protection dictated by international organizations and sovereign states. Through this mechanism, they become norm enforcers.

Genevieve Ritchie (2018) highlights how, in the private sponsorship field, the Canadian government intentionally demands civil society be responsible for the social spheres of refugees, such as community

integration, to prevent them from influencing the politics of refugee protection. Apolitical civil society is problematic for refugees who attempt to contest Canada's racialized policies towards migrants. Migration policy disregards the refugees' prior education and experiences in their home countries, creating obstacles to social integration and economic opportunities. While these struggles are political issues derived from the state-led assimilation to the Canadian system, refugees cannot speak out since civil society is a norm enforcer of the government. Private sponsorship shifted Canada's refugee acceptance discourse from a political focus on providing safe settlement for forced displacement to socio-economic humanitarian relief that contributes to cultural diversity. In the hegemonic regime of the state, civil society is conditioned to be insensitive to the continuous distress refugees experience due to the structural disadvantage of racialized citizens in Canada. In sum, the Canadian government controls civil society's involvement as a norm enforcer in refugee protection. This is accomplished through private sponsorship that only promotes refugees' social integration, thereby apoliticizing a responsibility to protect refugees. (Ritchie 2018, 671–72)

Japanese NGOs as Norm Entrepreneurs

Explaining the Concept of Norm Entrepreneur

According to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), norm construction in domestic policies is led by civil society actors, known as norm entrepreneurs. They believe that there is a "life cycle" to the construction of the norm, with the entrepreneurs in the private sphere promoting norms to public authorities in the norm emergence stage. Many norms fail at a tipping point between this preliminary emergence stage and the next: the norm cascade. Here, the norm spreads to the public authorities who might lend an ear to the entrepreneurs to gain political support from citizens. Once the norm becomes broadly accepted, it enters the internalization stage, becoming concrete in domestic society. To undergo these three stages successfully, the norm entrepreneur must be familiar with local behaviour standards, and in the process of advocating for the norm's emergence, existing norms are challenged in a counter-hegemonic act. Further, the emergence stage should lean on support from authorities in attempts to convince them to alter their perspectives on the "appropriate" norm that they had adopted. (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 893-900)

The Case of Japan

NGOs in Japan contest the state's passive behaviour toward refugee acceptance, making them norm entrepreneurs with legitimate means to advocate for active refugee acceptance (Osa 2003, 255). The norm for refugee protection in Japan is a high rejection rate derived from a strict review of refugee claimants who often do not have a valid permit to enter Japan (Kalicki 2019, 360). This reflects an understanding that refugee protection is a sensitive issue in Asia as the state views them as a threat to domestic security and questions their irregularity (Nah 2016, 229). Japan has repeatedly been criticized by international organizations such as the UN for failing to respond to the surging refugee crisis despite being a wealthy democratic country (Kalicki 2019, 362). However, the government has weaponized the reluctance of Japanese citizens to actively accept refugees as an excuse for passive behaviour toward refugee protection (Kalicki 2019, 363).

In response, civil society in Japan has advocated for refugees' rights to contest the government. It started with the Association for Aid and Relief (AAR), which was founded in 1979 and is one of the oldest Japanese NGOs advocating for the advancement of refugee protection, and providing them with domestic and international resources (Osa 2003, 252). Yukika Soma started the AAR to provide resettlement for Indochinese refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, who, despite fleeing countries for asylum because of political tensions, had their claimant documentation refused by the Japanese government (2003, 252). Finnemore and Sikkink argue that NGOs, as norm entrepreneurs, build a network with authorities to gain support in making the state accept the emerging norm (1998, 900). However, according to Osa, this does not apply to the case of Japanese civil society because the Japanese government believes that only the state should serve its citizens, and citizens in the private sphere must not interfere with them (2003, 255). Although Soma did have connections to the authorities, the AAR could not gain support from the state (2003, 252). The government believes that refugee protection is a matter that should be dealt with bilaterally, among state actors, and not by citizens involved in civil society groups (2003, 252). Thus, the AAR embarked on refugee protection without working with the state, which makes them a unique norm entrepreneur (2003, 252).

Through civil society's continuous engagement with public assistance, NGOs in Japan are legally ensured of their autonomy, which means that Japanese NGOs can advocate for refugee protection while countering the state's reluctance to increase acceptance (Osa 2003, 257). Some examples of NGOs include the Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) and the Forum for Refugees Japan (FRJ). The JAR initiated the private resettlement of refugees to increase their acceptance along with policy implications to the government, which they wish to learn from Canada's experience (Kalicki 2019, 365). FRJ collectively engages with fellow NGOs to improve the nature of refugee protection in Japan, such as by providing service referrals to refugees in need and advocating for political advocacy (Forum for Refugees Japan, n.d.). These Japanese NGOs contest the government's passive behaviour in accepting refugees, making them norm entrepreneurs.

Despite such efforts at refugee protection, the fundamental obstacle to their counter-hegemonic activism remains in Japan—a lack of acceptance towards civil society stemming from some Japanese citizens viewing counter hegemony as "anti-government" (Osa 2003, 255). This indicates that counter-hegemonic refugee protection led by norm entrepreneurs in Japan is at the norm cascade where they are broadly acknowledged but still questioned about their roles (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 895). Civil society continues to contest the norm of low refugee acceptance as the Japanese government insists on maintaining the status quo of their relationship (Osa 2003, 255).

Conclusion

This article demonstrates the contrasting approach to refugee advocacy in civil society by norm enforcers in Canada and norm entrepreneurs in Japan, which discloses the advantages and struggles of NGOs in facing the hegemonic state. Canada accepts more refugee claims of asylum seekers than Japan because of private sponsorship. The government utilizes a top-down approach to prioritize the gains stemming from accepting refugees, which is minimizing public expenditure by encouraging Canadian citizens to engage in refugee protection. Furthermore, the state removes the political interest of civil society to avoid having refugees challenge their discriminatory migrant policies. On the one hand, civil society involved in private sponsorship

in Canada is a norm enforcer who engages in the social integration of refugees and does not interfere with the politics of refugees. On the other hand, Japan has a significantly low acceptance of refugees due to the state's restrictive migration policies that civil society counteracts. NGOs in Japan created a new norm through which civil society advocates for refugee protection by providing them with resources and proposing policies to increase their acceptance. The contrast between norm enforcers and norm entrepreneurs in the case studies of Canada and Japan indicates civil society's struggle to face hegemonic norms. It also reveals the difficulties in balancing the states' refugee acceptance while autonomous civil society seeks to advocate for refugees.

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The Sovereign's Dilemma: Immigration Restriction and Human Rights in Conflict; Violations of the CMW as seen in the United States and Australia

Written by Albane Marion, edited by Ema Sédillot Daniel.

Introduction

Labor migration serves as a critical pillar of the global economy, with developed nations relying heavily on the cheaper labor of workers from developing countries. These workers, concentrated in sectors like agriculture, domestic work, and construction, often face severe rights violations. In response to these challenges, the International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted the C143 Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention in 1975. This convention aims to combat the clandestine movement and exploitation of irregular migrant workers while ensuring equal treatment for legally employed migrant workers (International Labour Organization 1975). By the early 2000s, many countries had ratified these provisions, and this convention enabled an international treaty focusing on the rights of international migrant workers, emphasizing the link between migration and human rights (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 2003). Since then, this legal scope discussion has been expanding. However, there is a growth in the dichotomy between profoundly curated promised protection, and what migrants experience as it relates to international labor rights. Rights are expensive and come at a cost, so countries are reluctant to acknowledge and ratify the recommendations of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) - the more a country is open to migrants, the fewer rights migrants have. Migrants obtaining rights within their projected country of stay is already a big enough ask from labor-receiving countries, but the first task is migrants obtaining rights at the border.

The very concept of the "illegal alien" is a legal fiction produced by immigration laws that assert the nation-state's sovereign right to control borders and determine membership. As Mae Ngai, a professor at Columbia University and an expert on U.S. immigration history, argues, the category of "illegal alienism" itself should be subject to critical scrutiny, as it is through law that certain migrants are constituted as "illegal" subjects existing outside formal belonging. Nicholas De Genova, a scholar of migration, borders, and citizenship, is a professor of anthropology known for his critical analysis of immigration enforcement and its role in producing "illegality" as a social condition. De Genova contends that much scholarship uncritically reproduces this hegemonic notion of "illegality" as a natural, self-evident condition rather than interrogating how it is constructed through law and discourse (De Genova 2002). This essay will explore how countries like the United States and Australia have breached rights highlighted within the CMW that have internationally been promised to migrants, especially as it relates to border conditions in Articles 44 and 45. Whilst United States immigration laws and their selective enforcement have racialized "illegality" over several instances in the past, by facilitating the importation of Mexican migrant labor while simultaneously rendering it "illegal" through deportation policies and the criminalization of undocumented status, Australia has also been seen to

breach international law with its controversial treatment of migrants, especially children being separated from their families, when processed on Nauru, an island in Oceania. Thus, this essay will therefore explore the Trump administration's 'zero tolerance' policy that resulted in widespread family separations at the Mexican border, as well as the prolonged detention of migrant children in facilities like those run by ICE/CBP and Australia's offshore centers, representing egregious violations of Articles 44 and 45 of the CMW on protecting family unity and the rights of migrant children. Both of these CMW violations will be further explored using an analytical lens brought by De Genova and Ngai's academic writings, which will further exemplify how immigration enforcement practices can directly undermine fundamental human rights protections for migrants.

Family Separations under Trump's "Zero Tolerance" Policy

Unity of the families of migrants and migrant workers is encompassed by the rights appropriated with Article 44(1) of the CMW, and obligates states to facilitate such unity of families, especially as it relates to the reunification of migrant workers in regular immigration status with their spouses and children, which is essential to protecting migrant workers' family right (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 1990). Article 45(2) of the CMW holds, in part, that state parties should take appropriate measures to make sure that the reunification of migrant workers, as well as those with minor-dependent children, is a smooth process (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 1990). As well, Article 45 requires states to provide equal treatment to family members of immigrants, among which are migrant workers (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights 1990). Abusive treatment of immigrants attempting to travel to the United States from Mexico, especially as seen during the Trump Administration, and constitutes a direct violation of Articles 44 and 45 of the CMW. As commonly known, the Mexico-United States border is highly popular, with many migrants in search of better economic and social opportunities from the Global South seeking to enter. Many of these migrants are hoping to find job opportunities in the United States, some with hopes to build a new life, which often provides much more difficult than previously anticipated. Also, many migrant workers leave their families in their state of origin, which Article 44 of the CMW should solve by allowing for them to reunite with their families, but this is rarely the case due to their experiencing oppressive conditions at the border and in detention centers.

Ngai delves into her book Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and The Making of Modern America by exploring the historical construction of illegal immigration in the United States, especially the complexities of immigration law and the concept of illegal aliens. She starts by presenting the case of Rosario Hernandez, an individual ordered to be deported to Mexico due to past convictions, to illustrate the challenges and normative judgments embedded in immigration policy (Ngai 2004, 1). This is specifically underscored by her exploring the historical origins of the "illegal alien" in American law and society, focusing on the years 1924 to 1965, which marked the tenure of the national origins quota system, to which she argues still has a lasting impact on immigration policy to this day (Ngai 2004, 3). Most importantly, Ngai holds that there is a paradoxical position of illegal immigrants in American society, where they are both welcome and unwelcome, who are "woven into the economic fabric of the nation [but] as cheap and disposable labor" yet marginalized and excluded from the polity, which underscores the real inconsistency in how they have been treated in the country, and at the border (Ngai 2004, 2). There has been, however, a real consistency in "the centrality [that] sovereignty in immigration

policy [which] has had important consequences, [for example allowing] Congress to create, as even the Supreme Court described, 'rules that would be unacceptable if applied to citizens'" (Ngai 2004, 12).

An example of a CMW violation is one that was enacted by the Trump administration in 2018, coming into conflict with missions outlined within the CMW, known as the "zero-tolerance" policy. The policy directed U.S. Attorney's offices along the southwest border to prosecute all cases of illegal border crossings referred to them by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection to achieve 100% prosecution rates (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS OIG) 2019). This relates, very much so, to the many migrant workers in the United States as well, in the same situation as Rosario Hernandez, who had a proper employment situation in the United States, but was immediately sent back to his home country (Ngai 2004, 1), or others who were jailed because of small criminal offenses. In this way, because children cannot be jailed with their parents during criminal proceedings, the zero-tolerance policy resulted in the separation of over 5,000 children from their parents at the border (PBS NewsHour 2022) . Adults were most often held in federal detention while their children were transferred to the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Health and Human Services Department (HHS) of the United States Government (Human Rights Watch 2024). The policy was also implemented with incorrectly-linked systems to track or reunite the separated families, which led to lasting trauma, and, in some cases, parents being deported without their children (Santana 2024).

HHS faced significant challenges in identifying separated children, including the lack of an existing, integrated data system to track separated families across HHS and DHS as well as the complexity of determining which children should be considered separated as a justified violation of the CMW (HHS OIG) 2019). As well, the children of the detainees were kept in inadequate conditions, some facing threats to their physical and mental health owing to "inappropriate medical care" (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health 2024). A family's ability to be together is important not only to maintain the integrity of the family unit, but also because its destruction has a detrimental impact on liberty, access to justice, and protection, which the CMW underscores (Support Kind 2020). Although the United States government should prioritize liberty and family unity in its immigration policy, including enforcement actions, government agencies with enforcement and custody responsibilities lacked the adequate tools to do so in this situation, and Ngai holds that "deportation stories like these" are entirely related to problems in American immigration policy, delegitimizing the United States' signing of the CMW (Ngai 2004, 1).

Ngai emphasizes that "immigration policy not only speaks to the nation's vision itself, it also signals its position in the world and its relationships with other nation-states" (Ngai 2004, 9). Applied to the American context, this suggests that there is a much-needed critique of American exceptionalism as it relates to its immigration policy, even as "immigrants have always been but a small percentage of the receiving country's total population" but a key part of the country's economic revenue (Ngai 2004, 12). Although the Trump administration's restrictive immigration policies, including zero tolerance, were later found to be harmful and are now being reversed by the Biden administration, the government's handling of immigration is very much anchored within the origins of immigration policy. The construction of the term "illegal aliens" or "impossible subjects" by Ngai indicates there are those who can be a part of the nation and those who cannot, relating to how the US's monopolization of authority determines legality, a "notion deeply implicated in the development of the 20th century" (Ngai 2004, 15). Such monopolization indeed clashes with the desire of the United States to expand its labor force and uphold its economic activity, indicating a profound contradiction between labor

demand and surveillance seen clearly through Trump's violation of the CMW in 2018. Individuals are perceived as illegal and unwanted but also necessary for the labor workforce. With the added concept of criminality, and how being an illegal alien inflates your immigration status to being a criminal, racialization can be impacted by policies and actual immigration law, as seen with the thousands of migrants illegally detained at the border. All in all, American immigration policies created racial hierarchies, inherently leading to the creation of illegal aliens, and most of these illegal aliens never obtaining the chance to become citizens because of their race, often facing harsh conditions at borders.

Australia's Detention of Migrant Children on Nauru Island

Another rather extreme breach of rights included within Articles 44 and 45 of the CMW can be traced to Australia's immigration habits and their detention of asylum seekers and migrant workers in the Republic of Nauru before they enter the mainland. Any migrant, temporary foreign worker, or asylum seeker planning on arriving by boat cannot settle in Australia before they are "forcibly taken to offshore 'Refugee Processing Centers', one of which is on the remote Pacific island of Nauru" which is claimed by the government to be able to deter anyone who may take otherwise hazardous boat crossings into Australia (Amnesty International 2016, 4). Nonetheless, this has been recognized as an offshore processing "designed to be punitive … [and is a clear] demonstration of Australia protecting its borders" with the detention centers kept well-hidden from the international eye and with most journalists often denied entry (Amnesty International 2016, 4). Amongst those migrants, "mental illness and incidents of self-harm" were reported as "shockingly commonplace" when an Amnesty International researcher was able to get access to Nauru island in July of 2016, where levels of healthcare and overall conditions were inadequate in the detention centers (Amnesty International 2016, 5). Most importantly, the extent to which the children of these detainees on Nauru island are abused cannot be understated, with most of them separated from their parents violating conditions Articles 44 and 45 of the CMW. Parents' inability to protect their children as well as not being able to be reunited with them during their detention experience, is one of "the many conditions that [further] exacerbate the suffering of the detainees" (Amnesty International 2016, 6). Another violation that has been seen in Nauru has been the denial for children to attend schooling, which is a further violation of Article 45(3).

All these violations have been facilitated, it has been reported, by a deliberate policy of secrecy, all of which had been settled by the Government of Australia and is nonetheless still going on to this day (Osborne 2023). Whilst the Government of Nauru is responsible for the violations of human rights that are taking place within detention centers on its territory, Australia is directly responsible for the people that experience these abuses, with its legislature empowering the government to prosecute and imprison arrivers. De Genova holds that the law in many labor-receiving and asylum-seeking countries "defines the parameters of its operations" which therefore "engender[s] the conditions of possibility for (…) these illegal practices" to take place (De Genova 2002, 424). Therefore, these illegalities, such as the violations experienced by these detainees, are constituted, and regimented by the law "in a manner that presumes to be more or less definitive (…) and with a considerable degree of calculation" (De Genova 2002, 424). As more and more shocking conditions faced by detainees on Nauru became known to the public eye, thereby abolishing its international reputation, the Australian government has failed to implement change. They argue that "any change to Australia's deterrence-oriented policies will create a "pull factor", a weak attempt to justify "the abuses inherent in its offshore system

in the name of a fair and controlled immigration policy", perpetuating this 'illegality' (Amnesty International 2016, 7).

De Genova makes it clear that tactics like the one that Australia has utilized in this situation are in clear violation of the CMW core principles, since they separate migrant families and deprive migrants and their children of basic human rights. These are claimed to be tactics that are "ensnared in a struggle to subordinate the intractability that is intrinsic to the constitutive role of labor within capital, or what Marx described as 'a protracted and more or less concealed civil war'" because these tactics are technical and contradictory processes, rather than coherent and complete project (De Genova 2002, 425). It is clear that the "the requirement for the undocumented ... to refashion their social status with false 'papers' raises more general theoretical questions about legal legibility" where many workers have to rely on faulty working visas contracted by their employers. This ends up putting them into trouble at the border or sending them into detention centers like the ones operated by Australia (De Genova 2002, 428).

Policy Recommendations

To be able to construct solid policy recommendations for the United States and Australia, the key is to highlight the clear contradictions between state practices like family separations and indefinite child detention and the protections enshrined in the CMW. Proposing concrete policy reforms and accountability measures can help resolve violations of migrant children's fundamental rights to family unity and freedom from arbitrary detention. First, countries, be they the United States or Australia, and their respective departments of homeland security, should consider the family unity to be a primary factor in all detention decisions when assessing cases of immigration. This essay recommends that immigration personnel should receive "training and guidance on identification, documentation, processing, and placement" decisions for families when making decisions about the course of actions or consequences (HHS OIG 2019). Alternatives to detention should be considered instead of traditional institutional methods to avoid traumatically separating families, and agents should be careful in documenting and tracing all family relationships in such situations. Second, as they relate specifically to migrant workers who unfairly face legal consequences, countries should be mindful of extending labor law coverage and social protections to migrant workers, which would reduce instances of infractions as social services would assist them in day-to-day life. An example of this can be found in Kerala, India, which implemented the Kerala Migrant Workers' Welfare Scheme in 2010 by offering social security benefits to migrant laborers (Basheer 2015). This initiative provides access to healthcare, insurance coverage, and the establishment of safe housing facilities such as the 'Apna Ghar' hostel project (Bakshi 2025). This would also reduce their risk of facing any legal consequences if they were to break the law, decreasing their chance of being held in custody or sent back through detention centers' processes. Lastly, as it relates to the situation specifically in offshore detention centers like the one in Nauru, increasing Australia's refugee intake and expanding pathways for safe and legal migration is a non-negotiable necessity. Such detention centers and their policies were driven by states' desire to restrict immigration rather than addressing the root causes of forced displacement. Abandoning the policy of offshore processing and detention altogether is also another potential consideration that would reduce cruel and ineffective attempts to deter migrants, which has violated human rights and the CMW on multiple instances.

Conclusion

These enforcement practices related to immigration and human rights that were recognized to instead be violations of the CMW seen in the United States, Australia, and even other labor-receiving countries, can be interpreted as unintended consequences of detention policies and procedures. However, these policies were never built to consider the importance of family unity, and are therefore detrimental to migrants and their families. These deterrence policies intentionally restrict specific incoming waves of migrants, most of which, though, could provide economic benefits to these countries. Moreover, the violations of the CMW by the United States and Australia, as seen in their immigration enforcement practices, represent a profound contradiction between the human rights protections enshrined in international law and the sovereign prerogatives of nation-states to control their borders. The family separations under the Trump administration's "zero tolerance" policy and the prolonged detention of migrant children in offshore facilities like those on Nauru Island undermine the CMW's assertions on protecting family unity and the rights of migrant children. Therefore, to conclude, this essay has demonstrated that while these policies enacted by the United States and Australia may be driven by a desire to deter unauthorized migration, they fail to address the root causes of forced displacement and labor migration. Drawing on the work of both Mae Ngai and Nicholas De Genova, this essay has subsequently highlighted policy recommendations that states should follow. To uphold principles of the CMW, policymakers must prioritize family unity, expand legal migration pathways, and abandon punitive deterrence measures that violate fundamental human rights. Countries must align state practices with international human rights norms to fulfill their obligations under the CMW.

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